

DISCOURSES

BY THE

REV PHILIP P NEELY, D. D.

“Preach the word.”—PAUL.

FIRST SERIES

With an Introduction

BY THE

REV J. K. ARMSTRONG, A. M.

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TO

My Mother,

AND THE

REV JAMES WILLIAMS,
OF ARKANSAS,

TO BOTH OF WHOM, UNDER GOD, I OWE SO MUCH,

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED, BY

The Author.

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INTRODUCTION.

BY THE REV J. K. ARMSTRONG, A. M.

WE apprehend that a brief and just statement of some facts in connection with the history of the author as a preacher will be useful in this introduction. At the age of eighteen, he was urged and brought forward by the solicitude of friends to the work of the ministry. The academic advantages which he enjoyed were few and meagre. He went to school in the winter, and worked in the summer. Two years' schooling in an academy was all the scholastic help and training he ever received. Notwithstanding these discouragements, he essayed and perfected in an extraordinary degree his own mental development. He applied himself diligently to books. When in charge of the Conference Female College at Columbia, Tenn., (of which institution he was the founder,) he there, for two

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years, devoted himself to the Ancient Languages and Mathematics, as well as to a high and standard course of reading; of the results of which successful efforts at self-culture these sermons will stand as a proof.

Let the young men of the Church looking to the ministry take encouragement from such an example. We commend it to them. Despair not because it can never be your lot to enter the walls of a college. Be not discouraged because you cannot take the course of a theological seminary. Remember that, with will, perseverance, and industry, you may reach high positions in every department of human thought and culture.

Through the instrumentality of the Rev. James Williams, a local preacher, then of Tennessee, but now of Dallas county, Ark., he abandoned purposes and plans of entering the profession of law, which he had entertained for some time, and joined the Tennessee Conference in the year 1837.

From the partial and miscellaneous mental opportunities with which he was favored, he early saw and felt the necessity of self-reliance. With no guide or teacher, he was left to explore his own path, and yield in a great measure to the force of circumstances. He was a pupil, and sought to learn from whatever there was in him or about him. The depths and mysteries of his own heart and being, the phases and manifestations, the colorings and vicissitudes of human life and conduct, were to him most useful and valuable instructors.

The fields of primeval nature, in her woods and fountains, her groves and plains, her mountains and vales, her suns and stars, were the Helicons from which he drank whatever inspiration he has. He sought instruction from whatever he could derive it.

His was, then, eminently a hazardous course of self-training. Reading by the torchlight in the country cabin, reflection upon horseback in woods and fields, observation and experience, internal emotions and external relations, were used in view of light and guidance.

The urgent, repeated, and constant demand for his ministerial services called for incessant preparation. The night became a necessary part of the day's labor. Thus you perceive the disadvantages under which our author was compelled to commence and prosecute his ministry.

We regard it as just to him that a fair statement of these facts should accompany the publication of these sermons. If, then, the reader shall complete their thoughtful perusal, with the conviction that their author has a correct view of the end of preaching; that in respect of conviction, he sways the understanding, and of persuasion, that he makes a lasting impression on the heart; that his gravity is suitable to the serious nature of the subjects, and his warmth does justice to their importance; that in each sermon he has a point at which he aims, and thus gives to them unity; that he does not study to say all that can be said, but selects

the most striking, persuasive, and useful topics which the text suggests; that he is perspicuous, plain, and simple, so that all can understand, and that he invokes the aid of imagery only when his subject leads him to it, and his native and unaffected warmth impels him—he will be the better prepared, and the more disposed, to commend the industry and talent of the individual from whom they emanate.

In our judgment, the author has attempted to imitate no style, has sought no compromises with particular conventionalisms, condescended to no puerile attempts at the gratification of popular caprices or individual whims. He has disregarded the restraints and mannerism of pulpit style. He has sought to imbue his sermons with the naturalness of his own thoughts and feelings. He manifests no improper deference nor undue attachment to creeds, confessions, church formularies, or self-styled standards of critical judgment. He has shown no slavish regard to the technology of sect or party.

There can be no changeless form in pulpit style. While, on the one hand, pulpit style, in its philosophical basis, reposes in deep and unchangeable foundations, let us allow it enough of freedom to adapt itself to the transitory and fluxional character of language and style. Exclusiveness and caste of style in the pulpit must lead to sameness and dulness. The style of Barrow and Howe and Tillotson was the style of the times. By what

right shall we require successors now to follow in their footsteps in respect of style? Let the pulpit, in these particulars, accommodate itself to the ever-varying activity of the human mind.

Thus, while in all the essential elements of style it will be as unchangeable as God and Divine truth, in another respect, it can avail itself of that latitude and freedom whereby it can realize all the benefits of human progress and mental improvement and development.

Our author has often been charged with profuseness of drapery and gorgeousness of imagery. We believe he has been condemned without discrimination or judgment. To an audience of cultivated taste, what is more agreeable than a transfer from the sphere of spiritual feeling to the region of poetic excitement? It moves the intellect, arouses the emotions, and gratifies the highest æsthetic faculties of our souls. For illustration, suppose the subject the awful process of the final judgment. The preacher proposes to inspire a salutary alarm. He must invoke the utmost command of language, the highest powers of description and imagination. He describes the sudden waning of the sun, the blackening of the heavens, the falling of the stars, the growing thunders of coming wrath, the clang of the trumpet whose notes shall break the slumbers of the dead, the crash of the pillars of the earth, the bursting forth of long-imprisoned fires and the solving of all things in fervent heat, the brightened appearance of the Judge encircled by

the splendors of the court of heaven, the convoked assemblage of witnesses from all worlds filling the vast concave of the skies, the dense masses of the family of man crowding the area of the great tribunal, the separation of the multitude, the departure of the doomed, the triumphant ascent of the ransomed.

May not these stirring images be useful in arousing the torpor of the moral sentiments of the soul, in transferring it to that condition when good and evil may take that seat of influence which has been usurped by unsubstantial images of greatness, beauty, or terror? What are the thunderings of a thousand storms, what the clangor of the trump, or the crash of the earth, or the universal blaze; what the dazzling front of the celestial array, or even the appalling apparatus of final punishment, to the spirit that has become alive to the consciousness of its own moral condition, and is standing naked in the manifested presence of the High and Holy One?

The great facts of Christianity possess adjunctively the means of exciting, in a powerful degree, the emotions that belong to the imagination, as well as those that affect the heart. If the former supplant the latter, a fictitious piety is engendered. But in blending and combining the two in just proportion, we shall find springing the true and genuine fruits of evangelical piety.

With such views, we are not prepared to enter into the indiscriminate condemnation of imagery

in the pulpit. We find it in all that is good, great, or enduring. We find it in nature. The Bible is replete with it. It is the body, not the soul of Divine truth. If God has deigned to create and use it in every dispensation and communication to us, why shall we discard it?

A few words, by way of explanation, in regard to the author's manner of delivering his sermons, I beg leave to offer. For many years he has read his sermons. This practice was not commenced by him voluntarily. An injured throat, a diseased larynx, and somewhat unfavorable pulmonary symptoms, induced physicians to prescribe this manner of delivery to him as necessary to the preservation of his health, and the prolongation of his life. With fear and misgivings he attempted it. He succeeded in a degree almost unparalleled. He is almost universally regarded as more effective and powerful in reading than in speaking his sermons. For these reasons, he persists in the course. But let no one of his younger ministerial brethren be seduced by his example. The author has often assured me that he deeply deprecates the idea of wielding the smallest influence against the universal and immemorial usage of the Methodist pulpit.

We feel constrained to claim one allowance for our author by anticipation. It is, that there will be a manifest difference between these sermons as read, and as heard from the pulpit. This disparity can be easily accounted for. The intercourse between the writer and the reader cannot be as direct as that

between the speaker and the hearer. The hearer sees much, and hears much, to awaken and sustain the kind of thought, and tone of feeling, of which the reader is deprived. The pulpit with such an occupant is an electric telegraph, and the audience so many wires in the hands of the preacher. The words vibrate from nerve to nerve. There is much to impress and attract in the one not to be found in the other. Force and meaning are found in the speaker which are wanting in the writer.

For illustration and proof of these views, I refer the readers of this book to the author. Let one instance suffice for illustration. In the year 1848, he attended a protracted meeting in Greensborough, Ala. There had not been a revival in the Methodist Church for ten years. One or two protracted meetings had been held every year. The results had been partial. The best instrumentalities had been repeatedly invited and tried, but with no results. The pastor invited our author, then in Mobile, to assist him in a protracted meeting. He came. He preached, and prayed, and sung, for two weeks, with no signs of encouragement. Night after night the sound of the bell convoked a throng of intelligent and curious hearers to listen to the preacher. Invitations were repeatedly given and urged for penitents to approach the altar. No single demonstration was made: no one broke that heart-chilling silence. Sabbath night, the second week of the continuance of the meeting, approached. It was resolved that a final sermon be

preached: demonstration should determine the continuance of the meeting. The house was crowded to overflowing to hear the last sermon of the preacher. He, worn down by the incessant, exciting, laborious, and protracted exercises of the meeting, ascended the pulpit for his last effort. The subject was the idolatry of Ephraim. He was oppressed with the interest of the occasion. He spoke with a feeble and faltering voice. See his form, mark his gesticulation, his soul-lit eye, from which flashed irresistibly the strong sympathy and deep benevolence of his heart! Every feature speaks, and is fired and illuminated by the soul. Hear his voice! How powerfully arrestive and touching that voice! What music in its tones! what melody in its cadences! how melting in its pathos! how thrilling in its appeals! His pen can claim no such dominion over the soul. This book cannot so well rouse flagging powers: no book can so well grapple with and fix wandering convictions, nor quicken active impulses. The voice dares to linger longer in draping out an idea—dares to dilate longer, to decorate more than the pen—dares a larger field of illustration, a greater variety of imagery, and irresistibly touches and kindles emotions and sensibilities which the pen can never reach. That vast audience was swayed and prostrated. Emotion was wild and wildering. Tears gushed and flowed—shouts rent the air. He descended into the altar, gave the invitation for mourners to approach, and there was a simultane-

ous rush of scores to that altar, who were soon powerfully converted to God. Then and there commenced one of the most powerful revivals that was ever in the limits of the Alabama Conference. We deem this one example, selected from a large number during the course of his ministerial life, sufficient to show the disadvantages under which sermons published must appear coming from such a preacher.

The publication of this volume is not a voluntary and uninvited movement upon the part of the author. It is in accommodation to the expressed wishes of his numerous friends in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. It is a natural desire, an innocent curiosity. What more natural than that the multitudes who have everywhere crowded to hear him, and been edified, convicted, and awakened through their instrumentality, should wish to own, read, and preserve them? They have been delivered by him in most of the public places, and to large congregations, throughout this extensive field of his pulpit ministrations. They cannot be delivered again. Must they then be consigned to oblivion? His friends and the public deem their publication better. If Paul converted thousands through the instrumentality of preaching, he has converted millions through the instrumentality of his writings. By them, he, being dead, yet speaketh.

The pulpit ought to deal with deep conviction. A man of deep conviction on any subject will al-

ways be heard with interest. Let his convictions be true or false, if he has them, men will attend to him. Christendom has in this regard greatly derogated. It is not an age of deep conviction. Truth does not flash upon the mind with its natural power. Inspired truth does not bestir aright the human heart. There is no shaking among the dry bones of unbelief. We are too much disposed to make living convictions secondary to dead evidences. We want an anchor for our faith. We want to see and feel the adaptation of Christianity to our moral nature. With a conscious disrapture in my spiritual economy, convince me that in Christianity are to be found the remedial elements for my restoration: give me the atonement in my inner convictions: let me see and know that it is just intended and adapted to the renovation of my fallen being. Appeals to the understanding cannot kindle or make firm the Christian's faith. There is a Divine element in Christianity. It is from God. It is a living miracle. Give a preacher, in this or any age, this conviction, and he will bear all before him. With such a man, the pulpit is not the lecturer's desk. It is not the agora of the priesthood. It is not a sacrificial altar. It is not the last refuge of morbid vanity. It is not a rostrum for pompous declamation and theatrical exhibition. It is the divinely-constituted medium of intercourse and influence between God and man. It is a source of light, and truth, and power, that marks an era in the world. Earnest, simple, na-

tural, bold, courageous, it is the pioneer of a better coming day.

The pulpit can never accomplish its end until it sympathize with the masses. This sympathy is inseparable from deep conviction. The one seems to produce the other. It is a lamentable fact that the pulpit is losing its hold on popular sympathy. The very term of the minister's office makes him the servant of the people. He must not cater to clique, or caste, or sect. He must not know men according to flesh and blood. He must not compromise with whim, passion, or pleasure. All the power of a preacher must depend upon his capability to arrest the sympathies of his audience. Let him sympathize with them, and they will spontaneously reciprocate it. He must be able to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Let his words, transfused with this magic love, vibrate from nerve to nerve. Let the overflowings of his heart be seen, and they must be felt. Let him have and exhibit such sympathy, and men will be attached to him. Such men are irresistible. They bear mankind in their arms. They are the prophets and pioneers of a more loving time. They are Summerfields and Whitefields. No man is properly fitted for the pulpit unless gifted with this sympathetic nature. It is the daughter of charity—charity in action as well as in principle. It is that love for humanity which Jesus had, and which Christianity alone can inspire. It is that which suffers long and is kind. It is the highest and

most glorious attribute of Deity manifesting itself to men through one of his children. Whoever and wherever such men are, they must be felt. They become the source and centre of a powerful religious awakening in any age or country—not of an awakening on the subject of dogmatic theology, not an awakening on the subject of Church polity, but a revival of heartfelt, experimental godliness.

Much has been said and written on the subject of pulpit eloquence. The bar, the rostrum, and the pulpit, have been compared; their relative advantages and disadvantages as fields of oratory compared; the comparative effect of subjects, circumstances, and occasions of these different theatres of eloquence given. We shall not presume to enter this discussion. But we ask leave to make but one remark on the subject of pulpit eloquence.

Love is the mainspring of the soul, which sets all others in motion. When the blessed Jesus cast his eyes upon the multitude, “he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted.” He was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He had compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way. Love was the secret of his power and influence upon men. It was more irresistible and efficacious in winning them to God than the bare Omnipotence which darkened the sun, rent the rocks, and raised the dead. It was in this that Jesus was eloquent. In this respect, Paul nearly imitated Jesus. He manifested it to the Philippians when he said, “God is my record, how

greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." He declared it to the Corinthians when he said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" Go into the human heart, analyze and note its emotions. Look into Christianity. Regard its subjects and revelations, and where, in the universe, can you find such elements to raise the affections of the soul to the highest pitch and tone? to afford the most rational and sublime entertainment, and the best and noblest work for men and angels to all eternity? For instance:

1. There are the emotions of esteem, beauty, love. What object in the universe is so able to awaken and sustain these emotions as the infinite beauty, goodness, and amiableness of Him "who is the desire of all nations," the worship of angels, and "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely?"

2. Do we justly admire things which are great, sublime, wonderful? Here the preacher can expatiate, not over the limited sphere of tangible materialism, but over that glorious region of uncreated purity which the Bible reveals to our faith: the perfections of God; the illustrations of his ever-acting power; the transcendent combinations of his unfathomable wisdom; the awful exhibitions of his spotless holiness; the unfolding mysteries of providence and redemption. Such are the ordinary occupations and contemplations of the humblest and most ignorant devout man. Can the

investigations of the philosopher, the researches of the historian, or the calculations of the politician, fill the soul with such thoughts? It was in the effort to grasp such subjects that prophets and apostles, though unlearned and illiterate men, poured over the oracles which they delivered the resplendent lustre of unearthly eloquence. It was in drinking from these holy fountains of inspiration that Isaiah, and David, and John, have borne away the palm from Virgil and Homer. It was thus that Milton, quaffing deeply from these sacred fountains, and filling his soul with the conceptions of revelation, stands confessedly the sublimest of our inspired men.

3. Is the absence of good and the presence of evil attended with grief? Should not the loss of the Divine image which our souls have suffered—should not the absence of Him whose loving-kindness is better than life, in whose “presence is fullness of joy,” and at whose “right hand are pleasures for evermore,” and the presence of sin, our greatest enemy—sin the only cause of all other temporal, spiritual, and eternal evils—fill us with the most pungent and deepest sorrow?

4. Have we any “bowels of compassion?” What should move them like to human misery? Cast your eyes upon any corner of our globe, and will you not find enough to open up the fountains of this tender affection? Look within yourself, and see and confess what sin has there wrought; and

will you not find enough to draw forth and sustain this affection in the highest degree?

5. Does an assurance of any good excite joy? The actual possession of Christ in our hearts by faith; the well-assured promise of success in the last hour of mortal conflict; the hopeful descent of the body into its resting-place, for the sound of the archangel's trump; the triumphant ascent of the blood-washed spirit into the presence of the Father, to an enthronement among the nobles and princes of heaven, must excite joy unspeakable.

6. Do we hate things which are ugly and deformed? What is so odious as the execrable cause of all deformity in the universe? What is so hateful as the abominable thing which God loathes, which has transformed angels into devils, men into inferior demons, and the world into a great battle-field and charnel-house?

7. Is the majesty of Heaven insulted and dishonored? Should we not, like the burning seraphim, kindle into a holy flame? Should we not maintain a zeal in proportion to His infinite greatness and excellences?

8. Can any thing enliven our hope like the exceeding great and precious promises of God that cannot lie? the promise of Christ, heaven, and a world of eternal glory?

9. Can any thing awaken, rouse, and alarm our fear like the terrors of death, judgment, and eternal punishment?

Tones, looks, gestures, voice, all are impressed and produced by his subject. You read the spirit of his subject in his countenance. A burning seraph, hastening from the altar of atonement, having a live coal in his hand, "touches his lips." Understanding his subject thoroughly, he is convinced of its truth and reality: suitably affected with its weight and importance, he instructs, convinces, and edifies; in short, pleases, subdues, reigns, and triumphs over the hearts and affections of all.

In conclusion, we commend this volume to the public. As Americans, we ought to value such productions for national reasons. As Southern people, we ought to encourage it, because the author is a Southern man by birth and education. We are too servile to what is foreign, or to what is Northern, as if nothing good could come of ourselves. We ought to encourage a due proportion of religious and sacred literature, as well as any other kind of literature. Sermons are not very marketable. They are generally a drag and surfeit. We do not prize them as other works. Is this right? Sermons may be useful. They ought to be found in every library, on every centre-table. They mark the religious tone of the age. They are in some degree an expression of the religious state of the times. Through its preachers, the age must make and leave its impression upon the masses. They are the divinely-appointed media through which the religious life of a time makes a step of

progress. Sermons are the monuments of such preachers. They preserve and perpetuate to the wider circle of readers the spirit and influence of the author.

I am not sure that the popular indifference to published sermons is well founded. On what does it rest? Is this vast field of thought so cleanly swept by the great minds of other times as that nothing remains for their successors? Is there no room for authorship left here? Can men not think and write originally here as well as in any other department? The Bible is the richest and most inexhaustible mine of truth in existence.

Those preachers who, with becoming self-reliance and dependence, at the same time, upon God, enter into it, will never have cause to repeat or garble the language or the ideas of others. If the future astronomers still look through the depths of space for worlds that escaped the eyes of Newton, and Herschel, and LaPlace, why may not future preachers expect new tracts of thought in the Bible? If the microscope shall never exhaust the region of its wonders, but still points to fields unexplored, why may not the student of the Bible expect to be regaled by new things? We need a theological literature, as a Church, as a people. How many native productions in the South have we? How few published sermons by our own authors! Patronizing exclusively what is foreign, or Northern, we leave our own native talent to perish in obscurity. Any man in our section of country who

essays authorship here, does it at a great hazard. We ought to be more of a reading and thinking people than we are.

Let us not sacrifice Christian intelligence to Christian feeling. Both elements are essential in Christian character. The reading of sermons is more favorable to the exercise of thought than the hearing of them. In the one, there are the gestures, the voice, the eye, to arouse the emotions and the passions. But in reading, we can think, reason, and apply better. We ought to study and understand what the Scriptures mean. True evangelical religion strikes its roots into both the rational and emotional nature. There is a knowledge unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding in the things of God. A mere religion of sensation or imagination cannot endure affliction, deserve confidence, authorize dependence, or stand the test of martyrdom.

Steam may propel, but it cannot guide the vessel in its mystic way across the ocean. Zeal is right and good in its place; but wisdom is profitable to direct. Knowledge is power in religion, as well as in the affairs of man. Feeling is as important in religion as steam is in navigation. But we must govern our feelings, not they us. No man was ever good or great who did not assert and maintain that self-mastery.

There is no function of our being more neglected than that of religious thinking. Enthroned a spiritually-illuminated reason at the helm of our immor-

tality. Jesus Christ himself has told us that he prefers the man who not only hears the word but understands it. Internal emotion is not faith. The appropriate design of the ministry is the godly edifying which is in faith.

We hope that these sermons may not only be sold, but read, pondered, and improved. Let their thoughtful and careful perusal be our Sabbath-days' work. Let this volume bless every family whose house it enters. Let it be as the ark of the Lord unto a thousand homes. May it become an efficient element in forming the religious character of future generations.

With these views, we commend it to the [†]benediction of God. May he use it to his own glory and the good of souls! And may these introductory remarks, written it may be too venturously, be found at least not impeding, if haply they little assist, the great object for which we live, and pray, and preach, and were redeemed by the blood of Christ.

MARION, Ala., 1857.

Preface.

THIS volume is sent forth at the solicitation of many friends, whose wishes the author does not feel at liberty to disregard. They have heard the discourses delivered from the pulpit, and have expressed an earnest desire to have them, in this permanent form, in their homes. They have been kind to the author—many of them, under circumstances when kindness could be most appreciated; and he would not prove ungrateful. He has therefore prepared the volume, and is willing to commit its destiny to the hands of Him whom he serves.

It is but justice to say that these discourses have been arranged for the press in the midst of severe domestic affliction. In order to meet his pledges to publishers and friends, the author was compelled to toil by the wasting form of an only son, who was passing into the Dark Valley; and when the final hour came in which dust was given to dust, it left the mind poorly prepared to meet the demands of rigid criticism.

It may be, though, that the effect of his sad bereavement was to subdue an improper ambition, and to make the author

anxious mainly that the words he sends to the homes of his friends should be earnest and profitable, rather than pleasing. At all events, his highest wish in connection with this volume is, that it may contribute to an enlarged and enlightened piety among such as may read it. He is not writing for fame, but for usefulness. He trusts that he has outlived all undue anxiety as to the former, and that the manifold lessons which a good God has been teaching him, through a most varied and trying past, have impressed him with the emptiness of earthly honor, and the vanity of human applause.

The author is not insensible to the fact that these Discourses will not seem to the eye what they were to the ear; that many who heard them will, on reading them, be disappointed. Were he, therefore, concerned merely as to pulpit reputation, he would withhold them from the public. This, however, has passed away with the dew of his youth; and he would now hold himself, with whatever he has written, as belonging to God, to be employed as the Father, in his providence, may direct.

Esteemed friends have asked for this volume; and it is now given to them, with the anxious prayer that the blessing of the good God may attend its course, and that, through its instrumentality, some toiling Christian may be strengthened somewhat for the tasks of life.

Marion, Ala.

DISCOURSE I.

The Preaching needed by the Times.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALABAMA CONFERENCE, IN EUTAW, ALABAMA,
DECEMBER 5, 1855.

THE PREACHING NEEDED BY THE TIMES.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—
2 TIM. ii. 15.

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN:—I am before you this day to acquit myself of a task which your kindness has made obligatory on me, and in discharging which, I desire, by the blessing of God, to be of some service to you who have assigned me this duty. The circumstances surrounding us are sufficient of themselves to impress me with the solemnity of the occasion, as well as the responsibility of standing before you as your appointed organ. Here are veteran warriors, with whitened locks, and worn bodies, and tried weapons. Ye have come, venerable fathers, to let us look upon your familiar faces, to take your honored hands in ours, and to listen once more to your lessons of wisdom.

Your number is few we know, and therefore it

is that we cling to your lessening band with a love that would remember only that whatever of exemption from pioneer toil and sacrifice we may share, it is because you have lived and labored before us. Blessed are our eyes that they still behold you, and our hearts that you yet live in them! Around me are those also who are in the maturity of their manhood and in the prime of ministerial life. Ye, too, are here, my compeers, your armor bright with service, your courage strong because of past success, and your zeal kindling with increasing ardor in view of fields yet to be won and conquests to be made. Here, too, are the young, fresh from the tender associations of home, and, like the young shepherd of Israel, armed with gospel sling and pebble, impatient to go forth against the Goliath of sin.

In the providence of God, we are here—all here: no, not all, for one who mingled with us a year since has been summoned to his place among the valiant at God's right hand. Thank God! the voice that called him brought no fear.

“Tranquil amid alarms,
It found him on the field,
A veteran, slumbering on his arms,
Beneath his red-cross shield.
His sword was in his hand,
Still warm with recent fight,
Ready that moment, at command,
Through rock and steel to smite.”

Another, also, who went from our fold to serve in

the field of a sister Conference, has made his grave with the dead that sleep in another soil. We all loved Thomas H. Foster, and mourn that he is absent from our assembled band. Like the beauty of Israel, he has fallen while the dews of youth were yet on his locks, and we weep to think that we shall see his face no more in our midst; yet we sorrow not as those without hope, for he believed that "Jesus died and rose again;" and the promise of comfort is, that "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He is not here; but we shall meet him again,

"Where no farewell tears are shed."

Through the abundant mercy of God though, we are here to exchange our annual greetings, to cement our friendships, to review the past, to unite our thanksgivings for its mercies, and our contrition over its unfaithfulness. I, for one, bless God that I am permitted to take part in these annual meetings; and sometimes feel, brethren, that if it were given me to choose the time to die, and to arrange the circumstances of that solemn hour, I would ask God to give me my discharge at an Annual Conference, with my fathers and brethren around to sing to me of heaven, as I passed into its glory!

And now that we are all together with one accord in this place, and that we are assembled to hear the word of the Lord, I pray the Father that

“the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, may be acceptable” in his sight, and profitable to you all.

I shall speak to you with the more freedom, because the larger portion of those who have summoned me to this position are either my compeers as to age or younger than myself. There is, perhaps, no Conference in the South that can show so great a number of young men as the Alabama Conference. This increases the responsibility of my position, and makes me the more anxious to speak the truth, in the fear of God, and in love of your souls.

Entertaining, as I do, a profound conviction of the truth of the gospel, that it came from God, and has been given to mankind as the instrument of their salvation: believing, also, that its success must depend largely on the piety, intelligence, and zeal of those who have been called to make its saving health known to the people; and feeling a deep interest in the success of our ministry, and a desire that our young men, many of whom have entered upon their holy calling with advantages not accessible to others of us in our youth-time, should go far beyond us: believing and feeling thus, I shall devote the hour and the occasion to some reflections on the work to which we have been solemnly summoned.

In doing this, we will assume that the institution of the gospel ministry is of God; that no man should enter upon it without having been regene-

rated by the Holy Spirit, and divinely impelled to consecrate himself to the ministry of reconciliation; that the duties pertaining to this ministry should fill his heart, employ his mind, and absorb his time: in a word, that preaching the gospel should be his one, constant, and all-engrossing work, and one, too, from which neither the love of ease, nor the accumulation of wealth, nor the dreams of ambition, nor any of the entanglements of life, should divert him; that the soul, the empaled, sinful, dead soul, should be always before him, as a witness of his high mission, as a demand on his ceaseless action, and as an encouragement to him to struggle earnestly, to toil unwearyingly, to "hope on, and hope ever."

Having assumed this much, I proceed now to address you as men appointed to "divide the word of truth," and to make known the science of salvation.

The salvation of a sinner is essentially bound up with his knowledge of the truth. Before he passes into the new life to which the gospel invites, there must be an intelligent reception of that gospel, and a reliance on the sacrifice for sin which it presents.

This reception and reliance will be satisfying in proportion to the clear and comprehensive manner in which the truth is presented to the intellect and affections.

For the gospel to have its largest success upon the mind and the consciousness, it must be re-

ceived, believed in, and studied in its entirety. He, therefore, who would rightly divide the gospel, in his preaching, must study to present it in all its range and comprehensiveness. There are many who preach nothing but the gospel all their lives, but who die without having been gospel preachers in the full sense of the term.

The ministrations of such a preacher are a part of the gospel, it is true, and he is a gospel preacher as far as he preaches at all; indeed, we will suppose his messages to contain nothing but the gospel, or, at least, fragments of the gospel; yet, after all, for lack of much that is indispensable to the complement of the word of truth, he falls short of being a true gospel preacher, and fails to accomplish that larger good to which the ministry of reconciliation has been appointed.

The perfection of Christian life can never be wrought under a ministry of this kind, of which there are many representatives in all the communions of this land. Such a teacher may lead his disciples into some green places, yet there will be many arid wastes and bleak moors along the path of their journeyings. They will be well taught, it may be, in some things; wedded, perhaps, to the dogmas that engross his thoughts and occupy his time, but in other things of vital worth they will be ignorant. If the one-idea-istic teachings of such an instructor assume a dogmatic form, as they often do, his disciples who gather around his desk weekly, will, in the degree of their intel-

lective sympathy with him, and his influence over them, be absorbed with the doctrinal features of the gospel, and that, not so much with a view to having unfolded to them the wondrous wisdom of God, as to be built up in the favorite dogmas of their teacher, and of being prepared to wage successful controversy with those who are in doctrinal antagonism with their creed. The tendency of all such teachers and disciples is toward bigotry, rather than earnest, vital godliness.

The truth to be divided, my brethren, has a perfect unity. It has been called a grand "circular movement," whose beginning was in the garden of Eden, and whose consummation is to be amid the glories of the New Jerusalem. The period intervening between the withering of Eden and the housing of the redeemed and glorified in the city of our God, is that in which this circular-moving system of truth is to "unfold itself as a perfect and organic whole;" and it is that the people of this world may master its marvellous revelations—may discriminate and adjust its relations to God and to themselves, to time and eternity, to the past, present, and future, and thus not only make a personal and saving application of them, but be able to know somewhat of the hour of the world, and thereby be prepared to make discoveries in science and the march of learning; revolutions in government, and changes in philosophy; the falling of crowns, the wreck of empires, and the triumph of freedom, tributary to this grand unfolding and

to the recovery of our world, that God has appointed a ministry, and that this ministry is to rightly divide the word of truth. To do this so as to honor that truth by making it an instrument of universal enlightenment and of salvation, it must be preached in its unity—must be made known in its entirety.

That our views may be clearly before you, we will consider the truth to be divided—or the gospel to be preached—according to a plain classification with which we are all familiar, as *doctrinal*, *experimental*, and *practical*.

1. And now, following this simple division, we remark, first, *that this word of truth should be unfolded in all its essential doctrines*.

By essential doctrines, we mean such as must be known before we can comprehend any thing of the nature of God and of man, and of the relations we bear to him and to each other. These doctrines refer to him in his absolute and relative being, and to man as he stands related to God and to his kind. As such, they should be studied, and then made known.

They are not only theologic, but humanitarian; not mere abstractions, which, however true they may be proven, when cast into logical forms, exist in what might be called objective repose, but doctrines that enter into our mortal and immortal being—that have a subjective adaptation—a vital connection with all being, human and divine, and thus fit in, into the consciousness of man, whether

regarded as an individual or as an integral of the great aggregate of being.

These doctrines are laid down in our text-books, and need not be catalogued now, since it is presumed that you are familiar with their systematic arrangement. In these every preacher should be instructed; and so far as may be necessary to the outlining of his theological faith, in instructing the people in that faith, in maintaining and defending it, and in making an application of that faith to the conditions of those whose salvation he is to seek, he should state them logically and in dogmatic form. They constitute the foundation whereon we are to build, and must not, therefore, be overlooked. Whatever is needful in exegetical theology—such as a profound acquaintance with the laws of criticism and of interpretation—should be sought as a preparative for teaching the doctrines of the gospel truly and successfully; and since these doctrines are exposed to assaults, it becomes every preacher of the word to arm himself for the defence of the truth by such protection as a diligent study of apologetical theology will give him. By thus preparing himself to know what the truth is—to state it correctly, and to defend it ably—he is made ready to stand forth as an unfolders of those doctrines with which the gospel of the Son of God is burdened.

In the statement and defence of truth in its dogmatic forms, we should not forget that the aggressions made upon the faith of Jesus have changed

with the times; that this is the age of speculation, coupled with great humanitarian movements, by which the mind and heart of the world are being stirred, and that he who would adapt his ministry to existing exigences, must, in his preparations as a student, and his labors as a workman, get out of the worn and beaten track of foregone times, pushing his investigations with an eye to what is being done now by the enemies of orthodoxy, rather than what was done in the days of our fathers, and building his entrenchments around the truth with a view to existing aggressions, rather than those of an obsolete age. We have called this the speculative and humanitarian epoch—the age of free-thinking, of latitudinarian interpretation, and of agrarianism; the age of eclecticism in philosophy, of modification in theology, of unbelief in science; in a word, an age of the most subtle and dangerous infidelity by which the foundations of religion have ever been shaken. The religious mind of Europe quivers under the excitement: the electric shock has extended to the New World; and as averse as we may be to a contest for which we are not fully prepared, and to meet which successfully will cost us agony and brain-sweat, it is upon us, and must be met, or our altars will be broken down, and the standard-sheet of our blood-defended orthodoxy made to trail in the dust. When we look upon these serried hosts marching against us, armed with the iron of logic, the cunningly-woven network of speculation, and the subtlety of philosophy—all

quickened by a great pulse of humanitarian sympathy—and then see the young men of our Church, with youth, vigorous constitutions, leisure hours, access to books, and many of them with scholastic advantages, limiting their investigations to the text-books and threadbare themes of a dead age, content to have only a knowledge of the way in which their fathers defended the truth, forgetful that that truth, being differently assailed now, must of necessity be stated in another form, and defended in ways adapted to the times: when I see this, I am filled with a profound regret, and can but wish for their baptism into the spirit of a Luther and a Wesley—men who studied their age, preached for their age, and whose glorious footprints will remain uneffaced while the genius of Christianity has a home in the world. And what is equally a source of regret and amazement is, that when some of the young prophets of our Israel, seeing these reefs in the distance, and wishing to prepare for them, begin to push their researches into these fields of speculation, and that, too, in the retention of the warm heart of evangelism, and in the exercise of childlike trust in God and confidence in his truth, with the one great, absorbing desire of being the John-the-Baptists of a coming millennium, there should be heard issuing from a clamoring multitude the cry of modern crucifixion, “Away with him and his speculations, his metaphysics and his transcendentalism!”

O, my brethren, bear with me, if in my earnestness I “speak right on.” I love this word of truth. It comforted me when as a poor sinner I sought pardon through its promises. It has comforted me a thousand times since: it was the pillow on which my sainted dead rested, as they passed from my bosom to that of God; and I feel this day that were it necessary I would suffer the hot fires of martyrdom to eat out this heart rather than compromise that truth, much less yield it; and therefore it is that, standing before you as I now do to indicate my honest conviction as to how it should be unfolded in this age, I am constrained to say, that what the age needs is old truth in new forms, for we have to combat old foes wearing new faces.

We would not depose doctrinal preaching in the strictly theological sense. We would not have our ministry lose sight of those great and time-honored pillars that support the temple of orthodoxy—such as the Divinity of the Son of God, the corruption of human nature, the atonement made by Christ, justification by faith, regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, etc. We would have these all preached; yet we would have them stated and defended with an adaptation to the age: we would have them uttered, not in the drawling tones of a withered and toothless theology, nor in the iron stays of a hard and rigid logic, but with the fresh speech of evangelic manhood, and with an earnest *abandon*, and a rich spiritual unction. We would have them looked on, not as mere theologic statuary, but as breathing

forms of truth—as having soul as well as form, as possessing power first to kill and then to make alive.

It is our firm conviction that our dogmatic truth is becoming too stereotyped. We are accustomed to train our young men to deal it out in prescriptions prepared and labelled for other times. There is danger of two extremes: on the one hand, of its being made up of formal definitions, without adaptation—dull abstractions, having neither point nor edge; and, on the other, of a zeal without knowledge, and an emotion that is affected, and therefore destitute of all true feeling. We want more of adaptation. The advances being made in science and in speculative philosophy, demand that we so prepare ourselves in these fields as that our statement of truth may be adapted to these advances. Without this preparation and defence, the masterful minds of the on-coming generation will be lost, we fear, in the gloom of speculation.

Having conceded the importance of preaching those doctrines which are set forth in our creeds and articles of religion, and which, when aggregated, make up what we call orthodoxy, we would remind you that there are others that enter more directly into those 'movements which we have called humanitarian, to the upholding of which the pulpit of this age is called. We must so distribute the word of truth as that men may come to a better knowledge of themselves and of their relations to each other, if we would meet the demands of our generation. The pulpit must concern itself with

the condition of humanity, for it is upon this subject that many of the systems with which we have to combat are expending their greatest energy.

We must stand before men prepared to tell them who they are; something of the nobility of their being; their individual and relative obligations; something of the world in which they dwell; the solemn and mysterious life which God has given them, and the higher and grander life to which this may lead them. Revelations on these great questions, with which human happiness has an essential connection, and over which philosophers, as well as the great and earnest souls of all lands, are now wrestling, have been copiously given in the word of truth, and the duty of the pulpit is to lift up its voice, and cause these revelations to go out over all the land. We should go to man in his ruin, and while we tell him of that ruin, tell him also of the grandeur of his being; of the germs of nobility imbedded within him; his capacity for improvement; the helps promised him, and thus call on him to arise from his bondage and be free. We should tell him of life, its awful duties, its manifold relations, and its changeless issues. We should impress him with the truth that all things have connection, and that each thing, however insignificant of itself, adds to the completion of the whole. We should tell him of the future that lies beyond what men call death, for he is a creature of motive, of hope, and of fear. Let us bring around him the voices of the departed, for they will be to him, in

his sorrow, remembrancers and pledges of future meeting. Call it sentimentality, if you will, yet these expressions of it not only calm the heart if suffering, but prove an auxiliary, in the hands of the faithful preacher, in winning back the wayward. Let him, then, as like a good shepherd he stands by some dead lamb of the flock, tell the surviving of the life to come :

“Of the bowers that are green and fair,
In the light of its summer shore ;
That the friends they loved and lost are there,
That they are there, and they weep no more ;”

and he may behold the stricken heart which nothing else could win, folding itself, like a weary flower in the evening time, and resting its grief on the bosom of all-pitying Love.

2. *We observe next, that he who would rightly divide the word of truth, much preach that word in its experimental character.*

The gospel, my brethren, addresses itself to our consciousness, and is susceptible of demonstration from within. It, above all others, is a gloriously subjective system.

It is not only a temple of vast outline, of magnificent proportions, ravishing the intellect by its massive thought-work, and filling the mind with adoring wonder ; but it has an altar, whereon burns the fire of the Holy Spirit, and he who bows reverently before that altar, may “*know* the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

This has comforted millions, now in glory, and it

is the ground of rejoicing with millions more on their way. It is because of this element of the gospel that it has maintained its hold in the world, in despite of opposition. Men have "*known* whom they believed"—have received into their conscious being the truth that Jesus taught—have been made partakers of the Divine nature in all the fulness of spiritual communication—have been elevated into a holy, tranquil, blessed life—have been sustained under circumstances where nature was impotent, and where philosophy was a mockery—have, under the upholdings of a Divine arm, and because of the out-lookings of an immortal vision, gone into damp dungeons, and worn the eating chain of persecution, with songs of rejoicing breaking from their lips; while from the crimsoned block, the cross of agony, and the fire-girdled stake, has floated back the shout, "We know him whom we have believed," and find him still a "present help in trouble." But for this element, this susceptibility of subjective demonstration, the gospel would long since have been regarded as a mere monument of the inventive genius of man, and would now occupy a place with the mythologies of Greece and Rome.

Theory is good, my brethren, but experience is better. The one may build us up in the faith, yet the other gives us knowledge, and it is *knowledge* that the soul hungers for, and it is *knowledge* only that can hush its doubts, and silence its moans of disquiet.

I, for one, thank God for a gospel that can unfold itself to my soul, with a certainty that will

leave a conviction of its truth burning on my heart, as well as inscribed on my understanding; a gospel which has been compared to the “sun, gradually rising on some magnificent landscape, and ever, as it rises, is bringing out one headland into light and prominence, and then another; anon kindling the glory-smitten summit of some far-off mountain, and then lighting up the recesses of some near valley; and so travelling on, till nothing remains in shadow, no nook nor corner hid from the light and heat of it; but the whole prospect standing out in the clearness and splendor of the brightest noon.”

There never was a time, perhaps, when the presentation of this element of the gospel, and that too with understanding and with power, was more loudly called for than now. We have alluded elsewhere to changes in the speculative mind of the age. They are seen particularly in religion and philosophy. Experience—by which we mean a communion of our entire being, intellective and affectional, with the All-father—is being lost sight of, in the zeal of many for forms and creeds. The absurdities to which the French Encyclopedists of the last century reduced the Sensationalism of Locke, were easily exploded by the Watsons and Stewarts of the time; but while the walls of this system were crumbling because of internal weakness, lo! a stronger citadel of unbelief appeared in the Idealistic Rationalism of Germany.

This is the phase of infidelity with which we have to do, and for this contest we must prepare ourselves

and our people. It has two divisions—one of which is committed against the gospel, and represented by such men as Strauss in Germany, Comte in France, Chapman in England, and Theodore Parker in this country; while the other is vacillating between a true evangelism and a pithless rationalism. This division may be represented by Schleirmacher in Germany, Cousin in France, Maurice in England, and Emerson in our country.

The first class is composed of the avowed enemies of our faith. Our contest with them must be to the death. We cannot advance toward them; they never will come to us. We are apart, wide as heaven and earth. They are pushing their invasion deep down into the popular mind. We meet it among the most thoughtful and earnest minds of our country. It has a place in our congregations; we hear its voice around the firesides, where we sit with the members of our flocks; it comes to us from the struggling minds of our sons at college: the foe is upon us, and we must meet it with victory or death. The other class is in a more hopeful attitude. They do not reject the gospel; they receive it with reverence for its author, and a profound respect for its doctrines, and therefore are they the more to be dreaded. The danger to be apprehended is not so much an overthrow of the gospel, as its reduction, by what they call a liberal or philosophic interpretation, to a level with philosophy, making it but little, if any, superior to the ethics of refined Paganism. As yet, theirs is a skepticism of senti-

ment rather than opinion—of philosophic criticism, more than of indifference—and is, therefore, hard to define.

This system, thus classified, has affected the entire mind of Germany, with a few noble exceptions. It is leavening the intellect of America. The men who are affected by this form of skepticism are not scoffers, nor are they feeble. They are, most of them, sincere men—earnest souls struggling in a wild, weltering sea of doubt—and need sympathy and not reproach. They are men of grand natures, misled, we believe, but heroical even in their wanderings—men of profound thought and pure lives. They seem to be in a state of chaos, waiting for a creative word. They are like lost mariners at sea, ploughing into a deeper, darker night at every new plunge. The only thing that can give them anchorage is experience—a conscious knowledge of a crucified Jesus. They are out upon the wide sea of speculation, and if they can be brought to this Ararat, they may find rest and blessedness, otherwise they will be without hope.

He, therefore, who would meet the demands of the time, must tell of experience. He must preach a gospel that enters into the consciousness; a gospel that can be tested outside of logic; a gospel which, breaking away from the shackles of the schools, and the trammels of the printing-press, speaks to the soul, and is felt; a gospel that can travel the world, and carry with it everywhere the elements of its own demonstration.

I rejoice, brethren, that such is the gospel we are commissioned to preach. I rejoice, because of its adaptation to the lowest as well as the highest conditions of our humanity. The Indian, roaming his primeval woods, listening for the voice of the Great Spirit in the rolling storm, can understand this feature of the "glorious gospel of the Son of God." The negro in the cotton-fields of the South, unlearned as he may be in doctrines, can read the handwriting of the Spirit on his heart. The scholar, in the laboratories of science, calculating with Kepler, or measuring worlds with Newton, or drinking in visions of the beautiful and the infinite with Milton, can know Jesus as a pardoning Saviour. These all, under the demonstration which the Spirit gives, can say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Brethren, yield, if you must, every thing else, but hold on to this.

If the timbers of our ship part in the storm, and we must go down, die with your heart-grasp on the experimental power of the gospel! Get the adornings of eloquence if you can: possess all knowledge: speak with the tongues of angels, if God has so gifted you: be strong in doctrine, powerful in logic, and overwhelming in argument, if you have ability; but have at the bottom of all, and circulating like life-blood through all, a personal knowledge of the risen Jesus. When death comes, this only can uncloud the valley, and make the terrible foe our friend.

Have it, then, as a part of your own conscious na-

ture, and whatever else your preaching may want, let it abound with this.

3. *The third classification of truth we called practical, which must also be insisted on by him who would rightly divide that truth.*

The gospel not only enjoins holy feeling, but also holy living. The latter is the endorsement of the former. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus, thus throwing upon his followers an obligation to act conservatively upon the world. The pulpit is to keep this before the people, and that, too, intelligently and discriminatingly.

The preacher should not only insist on this design of Christianity, but show also that it is to be accomplished, not by asceticism, not by seclusion, but by association with the world in all its business departments, and in the walks of social life, and by setting an example of pure and elevated life, during such association.

In insisting on practical godliness, he should present Jesus as the example to be followed, rather than mere secondary standards, and should be careful that in his zeal for usages which are but modal at best, and which must of necessity be conventional, he does not lose sight of the great Exemplar, and substitute in the place the observances of men. He should address himself to the moral nature—the conscience—and insist on principle rather than custom; principle, too, that will interfuse itself through all the outward life: it is *this* that should be insisted

on when we would urge to practical religion. This is the practical preaching we need in this age, and not that incessant fault-finding zeal which resolves itself into a "mania for some supernumerary duty or some virtue of recent origin, or an affectation of peculiar sanctity, hung out, it would seem, for notice and admiration." There is a kind of practical preaching, so called, which narrows piety down to mere personal exterior, and whose mission seems to be to the bodies rather than the souls of men. Of this class the lamented Bishop Bascom said, "They may do very well as tools and minions of functionary value, but are utterly unfit for Christian ministers."

We would not have the pulpit silent on matters like this, but let it not be absorbed with them. It is the soul that needs shaping; that done, in the beautiful proportions of the gospel, the casket in which it is placed will come to be in harmony with it. It is the absence of Christian principle in the broader walks of social and commercial life that is to be rebuked; for because of this is it that the gospel is so much retarded. It is the fact that many whose names occupy a place on our Church books are at ease, while a thousand wounds in our Zion call on them to act: it is this that is keeping back the millennium. We need to inculcate principle and energy among our people. Many of them yield and yield to temptation and indolence and worldly encroachments, until the line of distinction between them and the ungodly is lost, and infidelity, seizing

on their practice, shakes the carcass of such dead piety in the face of a humiliated Church, and exclaims, *Here is your boasted religion!*

Our Church has had a mission to perform on this ground ever since her organization, and nobly has she battled for purity among her people. Let us be faithful to our trust, and, with a courage that would know neither the ties of friendship nor blood, and that would go through surging flames for the right, still "cry aloud and spare not," until we see a purified Church living from principle: a Church living in deeds rather than professions, and acting with an energy that is immortal. In doing this we but follow the example of the greatest preacher that ever lived or died—the Son of God. We should set ourselves against all vice, and in opposition to whatever is not in harmony with holiness of heart and life. The true practical preacher must, if he be true to God and his calling, be ready with unflinching courage to rebuke sin wherever seen, and to denounce a spurious religion wherever found, and whomsoever it may offend. With unfaltering hand he should tear away from painted sepulchres their beautiful exterior, and in plain, honest, fearless words, exhibit them in their true character, as "full of rottenness and dead men's bones."

4. *Having thus outlined, and in a summary way explained our classification of truth, we would close this part of our task by impressing on you the importance of making "Jesus and him crucified" the throbbing heart in this body of gospel truth.*

We say the heart—the living, throbbing heart of all; for destitute of this vital element, this central pulse, the truth will fall dead from our mouths, no matter how girded with reason or adorned with rhetoric. Take this away from our sermons, and no matter whether they embody doctrine, or experience, or practice, they are powerless. It is the great truth of “God in Christ, reconciling the world”—of “Jesus crucified,” that gives energy to doctrines, comfort to experience, and pleasure to practice. Of what avail, for instance, would it be for you to instruct your hearers in the first great truth of revelation—the being of God—unless you linked with it the Cross on which the Son died? You might reason the most atheistic into a conviction of his existence. You might gather illustrations of that wonderful truth from the universe. You might lay tribute on his word, and present him as a glorious God, scattering systems abroad by his creative might, and governing them by his infinite wisdom; as a holy God, punishing iniquity, and meting out retribution to the despisers of his goodness; yet unless you connect with this truth Jesus as a sacrifice for sin, you will have failed to win the hearts of your hearers. You will have aroused their fears, without any ground of hope. You will have awakened interest, only to drive them into despair. As they hear of this God, glorious in holiness, inflexible in justice, and limitless in might, and remember that they are guilty before him and under doom of punishment, they are appalled, it may be,

but not saved. The utmost effect of your sermon is to wring from the troubled soul the cry of "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" In this state let the heart of truth send out its throb of central power—of crucified love. Tell the awakened, helpless, despairing sinner, of Calvary,—of God propitiated through his bleeding, dying Son, and even glorified in the salvation of the sinner, through the merits of a risen Saviour,—and how sweetly is the homage of his soul compelled, and with what adoring, grateful love does he regard the character of that God who, apart from Christ, was a "consuming fire!"

If we would preach so as that the gospel may prove the "power of God unto salvation," let us have the cross in all: let us keep Christ crucified as the sun in our system of doctrinal truth, binding all in holy harmony, imparting life and heat, and unloosing from them a divine splendor as they roll on in their moral orbits.

In referring to the experimental elements of truth also, let us hold on to an indwelling Christ—a conscious resurrection from moral death—in a word, to the power of the gospel as addressed to our subjective being, transforming the soul, and leaving therein a direct personal knowledge that its subjects "have passed from death unto life."

In urging practical truth, let us, as in doctrinal and experimental, keep Christ in the foreground as an example—an example of devotion to duty, of victory over temptation, of meekness and patience

under insult and trial, of forgiveness when wronged and injured and insulted, of sympathy for all humanity, and of love for the meanest and most degraded of our race. We would urge this need upon you with emphasis, and particularly on the young preachers of this generation; and we would do this the more earnestly because of what we have said on the subject of the kind of preparation necessary now for the unfolding and defence of the truth.

This preparation, while it is demanded by the times, is one of peril—a peril, too, through which the earnest student can only pass securely by keeping his heart, with all its treasures of affection, nailed to the cross.

Many of the speculations of the day wear the semblance of truth. They are the products of great minds. The men who advocate them seem to be in earnest. Their tendency will be to bewilder you by their endless mazes, their innumerable divergences. If not careful unto much prayer and constant watching, you will be captivated by what at your entrance on these fields will seem to be original views and sublime thought. In this way, unless you keep your heart pillowed on the bosom of the dying Nazarene, you will find yourselves drawn on after these vain conceits—these glittering bubbles on the wave of speculation. While, therefore, we regard it as necessary for you to make yourselves familiar with the battle-ground of this generation, with the battery and cannon of

your enemies, and their specious mode of warfare, while thus employed, we would conjure you to keep your gospel armor on. Destitute of that, you will become an easy captive. Whatever else your sermons may have, let Jesus be in them. Preach Christ crucified! This, after all, is your theme, and it is an infinite one. Every other truth in revelation is connected with this, just as every member of the body is connected with the heart. In the language of an eloquent preacher in England, Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds, we conjure you, brethren, to “keep to this theme. Abide by it, for it is unchanging. Its rigidness can never hamper your thoughts—its reiteration can never weary your inquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would you go from it? It is the unwinding of all the great principles. It is the expansion of all the glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all the blessed emotions. It is one: it is illimitable and eternal. O Calvary! we turn to thee. Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, thou only canst adjust! We have an aching void, which thou alone canst fill! We have pantings and longings, which thou only canst satisfy! Be thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be thou the earnestness of our deepest interests! Be thou inspiration, impulse, divinity, and all! Our tears never relieved us, until thou taughtest us to weep! Our smile only mocked us, until thou badest us rejoice! We have

known no way of peace, until we found our way to thee! Hope was banished from us, until its dove flew downward from thee upon our hearts! All was dormant, until thou didst stir! all was still within us, until thou didst agitate! Our eyes are yet lifted to thee, as to the hill from whence cometh all our help! Our feet shall ever stand on thee, O high mountain! and thou shalt make them beautiful, as we publish the glad tidings of Christ crucified to the world!"

Having assumed in the outset that the great concern of the preacher should be to save souls, and having endeavored to show that the most effectual way of doing this through the instrumentality of the gospel is to unfold that system in its range of doctrines, experience, and practice, we come now to dwell, in the form of exhortation, on some of the preparatives needful for such preaching.

For a preacher, my brethren, to be fully prepared for his vocation, he must not only be converted and called of God to preach: these are indispensable, and need neither argument nor exhortation to give conviction of their necessity; yet they are not enough. They are the basis on which to build, but not the building.

He who would make his ministry approved of God must bring mind as well as heart to the altar of consecration, for his mission has to do with the intellect as well as the emotions. He should hold himself under solemn tribute, not only to have his heart filled with the Holy Ghost, but to so cultivate

his mind and fill it with the treasures of knowledge as to be fully prepared for the great battle in which he is to engage. We have insisted, throughout this discourse, on a faithful exhibition of uncompounded gospel truth, and cannot, we think, be misunderstood on that subject. While we have done this, we would not be understood as teaching that the pulpit has no befitting shrine on which learning, in all her varied departments, can lay her intellectual "frankincense and myrrh;" neither that those who stand there as God's ambassadors can, without guilt, abandon themselves to idleness.

My brethren, to do this is to sin against God, and to put a foul stain on your high calling. The ministry, above all other professions or vocations, demands hard toil and unremitting industry for the acquisition of knowledge. And, without regard to those whom it may offend, we say to you this day, that the inattention of many in our ministry to this great preparative is without excuse, while the ignorance of others is a blot on Methodism and a dishonor to religion. And we will say more, that it is time for us, as a Church, to have courage enough to say to all such as have not love enough for the truth to impel them to study it, in all the meaning of the word *study*, that they are unfit to exercise the sacred functions of their abused calling, and that their shameful idleness neither can nor will be longer tolerated.

We are not advocating a thorough scholastic training as an *essential* preparative for the ministry;

but we do advocate the necessity of intense, constant, persevering application on the part of all who are engaged in it. The preacher, no matter how "*good a man*" he may be, nor how "*safe a case*" the district official may pronounce him, whose intellect is idle amid God's great farm-field of truth; who is content, if he possesses a dozen skeletons of sermons, purloined, it may be, from some one of the many catchpenny pulpit crutches, poured in on us in this accommodating, labor-saving age; who is self-complacent, with a few stereotyped generalities, badly conceived, and without systematic arrangement; who, sermon after sermon, begins with the fall of man and ends with the judgment parting; who, placing himself before the people as a preacher, an expounder of the gospel, has neither any arrangement of its doctrines, nor treasures of wisdom whereby to illustrate, nor arguments by which to defend them—the preacher, we say, who is thus ignorant, no matter whether his ignorance results from indolence, or from having his mind absorbed by secular matters, to the neglect of truth, is recreant before high Heaven, and should wear the burning brand of unworthiness. He should be outlawed from the pulpit, and placed among the most needy of his audience; for his ministrations, however famous for sound, can never accomplish any permanent good.

We do not mean by this to offer either consolation or encouragement to the demand made by many hearers, and the tendency evinced by many

preachers of this day, to substitute the abstractions of philosophy, and the "irrelevant sciences of the world," for the pure word of God. We witness, with regret, a perverted taste among a large class of intelligent hearers in our congregations—an increasing appetency for the wisdom of words, for preaching that is rationalistic, and for a pulpit sentimentality which, if not pantheistic, is of near akin. We are pained to see so many averse to all preaching save such as is festooned with beautiful imagery, and garlanded with rhetoric; forgetful, alas! that however beautiful the foliage they admire, its life is drawn from the root of the gospel.

We are grieved, we say, and do greatly deplore this growing indifference to the plain, strong, earnest statement and defence of gospel truth; yet, while we see this, and mourn over it, we are free to confess that it furnishes no argument, as some contend, against making philosophy and imagination, rhetoric and eloquence, and all else, tributary to the success of religion; neither will it answer as a plea before the bar of public judgment, or of final award, by those who are laying such "flattering unction" to their idle souls. These may have been abused, and their abuse may have done much of harm to ungodly and formal attendants on the ministry of the word; yet let us have discrimination enough not to suffer these lamentable abuses of what in itself is good to hinder us in "coveting earnestly the best gifts."

Learning, my brethren, is the handmaid of re-

ligion, and it is meet that the latter should be represented in a style becoming one of her high origin, her native majesty, and her eternity of promised good. Let us not, in our misguided zeal, lay a cold, formal hand on the ark of divine truth, as though it were only the word of men. It is the word of the Lord, and should awe us into reverence as we approach it. We should feel, while we are dividing this word, as if we were but handing out to the world what the great God had been giving us. And if the face of the great Hebrew legislator shone with a glory that could not be gazed on when he, rolling back the mountain cloud, and holding "audience with God," came down to the multitude, so, my brethren, should we come from study and prayer into our pulpits, and, with glowing ardor in our hearts, and burning words on our lips, hold communion with the people that attend on our ministry. Coming to them thus, who among us but would speak in

"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn?"

We have no sympathy with those who would take passion from the pulpit, and who, affecting to despise a fervid, glowing style, under the charge of turgidity, would give utterance to the truths of the "glorious gospel of God" in a barren diction, and in tones of nasal monotony; who, professedly from choice, hold communion with the inspiring themes of that gospel, with less of passion, less of heart-

heat and mind-heat, than a teacher of science would exhibit before his class in the school-room. Why should beauty of expression, together with imagery, be ignored in the pulpit, when their power is admitted and felt and used everywhere else? "Be simple," it is said, and so we say; but do not, in seeking this, fall into dulness. And if God has given you neither taste nor inclination to a chaste Grecian style, then cultivate what you have, and make your individuality as perfect as may be; and in your exposition, illustration, and enforcement of truth, connect the book of nature with the book of revelation, and feel free to draw upon her, from her fire-fretted dome to her central fires, for she is your Father's, and was made to subserve his glory.

We would speak plainly here, for there is need of it. We want the gospel preached—the pure, unadulterated gospel. We desire to see it triumphing everywhere, and we know that to do this it must be preached in "power and in demonstration of the Spirit." All this we know and would never forget; but, in addition, we want to see an increased attention to the manner in which this gospel should be presented. If it be meet that poets, who are the high-priests of the material world, should sing of nature in numbers that charm the listener, drawing beauty from her great solitudes and sweetness from her scattered flowers, enthroning her with majesty, and making her mountains, "from their residences among the clouds to their foundations among the rocks," oracular with sub-

limity, may not we, who stand in the chancel of a diviner cathedral, who walk among flowers crimsoned with the dew of Calvary—we, who are the *ministers* of God, and who bow before the altar of truth—may not we, too, if God has so gifted us, or if study can prepare us, interfuse our ministrations with the spirit of beauty, of grandeur, and of sublimity, so as to win the mind into a reverent acknowledgment of its claims, and so as to charm the heart into obedience and love?

Ah, my brethren, not until there is what the gifted Edward Irving called a “resurrection of thought” among the preachers of this age, and a struggling after holy attainments in proportion—an entering into the contest for more knowledge and larger grace; not until the pulpit free itself from the weights which indolence and bigotry and ignorance have heaped upon it, and is elevated to the high position of great thought and large charity and commanding purity; not until more of those who stand in it “cast off the wrinkled and withered skin of an obsolete age,” and seek for the fruits of “power and love, and of a sound mind”—not until this is done will the pulpit be, as it should, the Olympus of Divine majesty—the secret place of thunder—the brooding cloud from which the truth of God will flash upon the silent multitudes around, compelling, by a holy violence, the homage of the mind and the devotion of the heart.

While we advocate a progressive ministry, and earnestly exhort you to keep pace with the age,

both as to matter and style, we say to you, keep the gospel pure. Allow of no admixture. The temptation to this will be great, as you invade in your studies the fields of physical science and philosophic speculation. A knowledge of these should be sought, for they will aid in the illustration and defence of the truth; but do not substitute them for the truth, neither make the pulpit the place of exclusive instruction on them. The progress of science and religion is dissimilar, and hence the folly of any attempted fusion. "Science," as Mr. Watson has admirably said, "creeps, while religion expands her wings and soars." The progress of the one depends on increased research and new discoveries, and is numbered by chronological eras: the other is settled—has been settled of old, as to its principles, and has only to be acted on; and therefore it is, that when its course begins in the history of a man, it soon carries him to altitudes beyond the range of philosophy and science. The triumphs of religion in the human soul are won by faith, rather than research and discovery, and are therefore not subjects of minute observation, as in the case of science and philosophy. As the chariot of salvation bears the believing soul on in Christian progress, the wondering philosopher, surrounded by volumes of scholastic lore, hears not its sounding thongs and wheels, that

"Bicker and burn, to gain the expected goal:"

still the moving car passes on, high and higher still.

Faith scatters the clouds from its path; hope kindles her beautiful lights far away in the distance; love toils on, singing, and sometimes shouting, as she toils, until finally the trusting child of grace stands at the portals of his father's house, and, amid the acclaim of angels, enters through the gates into the city, and is at home.

He, then, who would make philosophy and religion synonymous, or even inter-interpretative in the popular sense, will find his preaching cold and powerless. They should be thoroughly studied, and often used as pulpit-helps; but to convert the pulpit into a scientific laboratory, and the house of God into a philosophic lecture-room, is "to creep when we might soar." It is to send intelligence by laggard post-boys when the mail-carrier of the clouds—the electric telegraph—is at our command. Be learned in all philosophies if you can, but let your employment of the capital acquired, as pulpit men, be suggestive, rather than elaborate—illustrative, instead of technical. To illustrate our meaning, we will suppose your congregation assembled on some radiant summer morning. You want to impress them with the majesty and beneficence of God, as displayed in nature. Now, the course we are objecting to would lead you to give a scientific disquisition on the entire solar system: that which we are recommending would cause you to lay contribution on your scientific knowledge only so far as to allude to the smiling sun as a proof of God's majesty and a symbol of his benevo-

lence. And as the multitude bow in the solemn chancel of that temple, one peal of thunder rolling away among the cloud-sanctuaries of the sky, and properly referred to, will shed on their reverent spirits a more hallowed sentiment than could be produced by a season's lectures on the electric fluid.

The word of the Lord should be our treasury, our hand-book, and eye-book, and heart-book; yet we should not despise or neglect collateral helps. The knowledge gained, however, from these sources should all be subordinated to the cross—should be animated by the vital energy and saving power of Christ crucified. Destitute of this, our ministrations, however profound, or learned, or beautiful, will be as “clouds that have no water,” floating along the heaven of the understanding and fancy, now heavy, it may be, with the burden of thought, and now bright with the rainbow-beauty of tropes and figures, yet leaving the soul with no higher feeling than that of admiration.

We mean by this not to undervalue a correct pulpit elocution, nor to disparage the study of rhetoric, and the subordination of these to the work of the pulpit. On the contrary, he is culpable who neglects them. We most heartily deprecate that pulpit cant, or, as it should be called, that clerical demagoguism, which revolts in holy horror at every thing like a finished manner, or an attractive style of preaching. It displays itself in certain coteries of pulpit stupidity by a loud decry-

ment of gifts which the wincing complainers have been too indolent to seek, and which yawning hearers have no capacity to appreciate. They profess to regard the gospel as dishonored, and religion as prostituted, if the one is preached in a style burning with imagery, and the other arrayed in the garments of poetry. They seem never to have discriminated between the imagination which, like the Minerva of mythology, is Jove-born, and those fanciful puerilities whose highest effect is the exhibition of a clerical coxcomb, and whose legitimate end, with all cultivated people, is a feeling of disgust for the pulpit-pedant, and of loathing for the spawn of vanity which he libelizes by calling it gospel. It matters not at all with this class of objectors if the imagination is kindled at the burning altar of God, or the fancy softened, and beautified, and spiritualized, by the light in which the angels bask; or the figures and illustrations are kindred with those which the sublime Isaiah, the pathetic Jeremiah, and the soaring Ezekiel, of the Old Testament, and the profound Paul, the loving John, and the grand-hearted Peter, of the New, have left among their recorded sermons. It is enough for these stereotyped editions of commonplace-isms—these Oliver Oldschools of the pulpit—that figures are used at all. With them it is *all* a departure from the gospel, from the old paths, evincing a compromising tendency in the ministry, and in evidence that preachers are substituting themselves for the cross. If they be right, then

were the great orators of the Old and New Testaments wrong; for the books handed down through the waste of generations, headed by their immortal names, were, some of them, streams of figures, successions of the grandest imagery, gorgeous trains of flashing tropes. They thought in images, they spoke in symbols, and have left the most stupendous monuments to imagination that the world possesses; and it is marvellous, indeed, that many preachers of the day, whose business it would seem is to disparage those who thus preach, do not see and feel the force of these examples, and have done decrying gifts which, although not possessed by them, have made unexampled the sermons of prophets and apostles.

If there be sincerity—and we accord this to many of them—in their views, they would do well to ponder the utterances of those preachers of the olden time, who were wont to lift up the soul through mighty sublimities into communion with God. They should pause beneath the shadow of the mountain of terror, and hear Moses, the meek, as he describes the shuddering earth, the glaring lightning, the vexed and disquiet elements, and the voices of thunder, and all in words and sentences quivering under the hot fires of imagination. They should listen to the wild chant of Miriam, as she stands on the banks of the Red Sea, and tells of the Lord, “glorious in holiness, fearful in praise, doing wonders,” with a sublimity loftier and grander than that of the English bard, when he sang of the thunder-voiced

Jura, and the loud-answering Alps. Passing by that awful prayer of Ezekiel, offered in the interval of earthquake pangs, and amid the whispering of voices, let them hear Job, as he tells of his fearful night visions, his terror and trembling, his uprisen hair, and the passing of the spirit commissioned to vindicate the justice of God. Let them give audience as he tells of the Lord as one "who shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; who commandeth the sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars; who spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the South; who doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number;" or, if still unconsenting, let them stand with the disciple whom Jesus loved, on an island

"Far amid the melancholy main,"

and gaze on the bursts of imagery outpoured from heaven, in which were seen the City of God, glittering in gold: the river of life gushing from beneath the throne, and bordered by the fruitful tree with its healing leaves: the prostration of adoring elders, in which were heard the shouts of rejoicing angels, the high festival of singing cherubim and burning seraphim, in which blood-washed millions blend the anthem of "redeeming grace and dying love;" and finally, the uprising of the great white throne, and the ultimate and eternal

"Bridal of the earth and sky,"

in which was heard "the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" Let them look, we say, on this blinding vision, and hear these grand depictions, and learn from all that neither the prophets of the old nor the apostles of the new dispensations thought it degrading to the gospel, or dishonoring to religion, or a displacement of the cross, to hang around each and all the web of a consecrated imagination.

What we insist on, then, is that the preacher consecrate, and then cultivate, the gifts God has conferred on him. No matter what they are, bring them into his service—lay them on the altar—divide the word of truth in a way accordant with your mental organization, and disregardful of the unkind animadversions made by the envious few, "study to show yourself approved of God" rather than men. If God has gifted him with the power, let him ride upon the whirlwind of his eloquence into the very hearts of his auditors, turning with the hot stream of his earnest and powerful utterances the wild current of infidelity: breaking from bondaged souls the fetters of pride and passion and worldliness, and then, leading them on by the wand of love, pause not until he behold them "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind." Let him, if he can, throw around religion every beauty, human and Divine, for she is worthy of all. Let him elevate her upon the high places of philosophy and

learning. Let him enthrone her, if he wish, upon the beautiful heights of Poesy, until her spirit breathe in every burst of harmony, from the chant of a sanhedrim of archangels, to the rural lay of a shepherd boy. Let him gather imagery, if the spirit of his mind so lead him, now from the deep sea, where the psalm of praise is heard rising to God in musical thunders, and now from the high empyrean, where the blue-girdled stars sleep in their robes of light; and now from dreaming flowers, and secluded dells, from silent solitudes and babbling brooks; from all in earth, or heaven, or hell; yet let all these be but the circle of revolving lights, of which the *Cross* is the central burning and far-shining orb.

He should labor to know the truth as God has revealed it, and then let him rightly divide it. In acquiring this knowledge, the mind will have to put forth its largest efforts. It will cost him toil and study, and, it may be, untold agony; but with the burden upon him and the commission of Jesus written upon his conscience, he must battle on. He should realize the awful responsibility of his relation to God and humanity: that he is Heaven's ambassador—God's mouth—authorized to negotiate with a world of sinners in matters pertaining to their great immortality. This immeasurable weight of responsibility pressed on the mind of the great apostle, and with shuddering distrust he cried, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And so will every true successor feel and inquire. This conscious help-

lessness will make him wakeful and suppliant at the midnight watch, and often at the breaking day find him sobbing his agony in the ear of Heaven, recoiling from the burden of his task, and wailing out the cry of, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"

He may have to struggle with doubt, and sometimes with despair, before he fully learns that "blessedness is better than happiness." His soul will be upturned, and its deep abysses laid bare, before its outstretched arms will be permitted to embrace the truth with the blessed trust of childhood. This disquiet every preacher who has lived profoundly has had to go through. The holy Christ passed into it, when "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil," and he whom that Christ would prepare to be a true evangelist, must follow him. It is the soul's fire-baptism, and to many has seemed as the fire of coming death. O Heaven! who can tell of the passionate cries which the spirit of an earnest preacher, far away from the Sabbath multitude, alone in his study, doing grim battle with the fiends of doubt, and the strangling demon of despair, sends to the far-away heaven! These you may never have known; but he who, abhorring all cant and pretension, resolved to give utterance to nothing simply because the Fathers taught it, or the Creeds and Confessions of Faith and Articles of Religion enjoin it, but determined, when God speaks to his soul, to speak the same words to his hearers—such a man will be tossed upon

his midnight pillow, and, with an agony little less than that of the damned, cry to the God of heaven.

But O, my brethren, sweet is it to such a one when, after sore battles and long wanderings, and midnight vigils and prayers, he emerges from the night with its clouds into the day with its supernatural light! when the All-father, having watched and waited and aided him through all, folds him on the bosom of love, and bids him stay his faltering soul on the promises of the gospel.

Then, and not till then, is he inducted into the kingdom of truth. He has been baptized into it, not by means of sacraments, nor by the teachers of theology, but by the Spirit of God and the seal of suffering. To such a man truth is dearer than life. It is his shrine. He worships it as the angels worship God. He loves it with a love that would wear a crown of martyrdom in its defence, for it is his Father's truth. He can preach it then as becomes the child of such a Father. It rises before his vision, not vague or impalpable, but as a continent marked by the deep travail of his own spirit, and one he can recommend with confidence to other voyagers. The ocean-path leading thereto he has travelled; the golden light fringing its shores he has basked in; and as he talks thereof, his words are not the babbling sounds of an infant theorist, but the fresh speech of one who stands forth in the manhood of his faith, rejoicing in a freedom brought to him by the truth of God.

What to him, from thence, are doubts but phan-

toms, which he may smite with the sword of truth, and so pass on? Like the majestic sun, treading with fiery footsteps along the heavens, he has the clouds and shadows all beneath him, and the glory within and around him. He has upon him the mantle of ascended prophets: the path of the ascended Captain of salvation is before his faith: while to the ear of his soul come floating back the words, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." The promises are beneath him, the everlasting arm is around him, and the far-off heaven opens to embosom him.

He may be misunderstood and misinterpreted by friends, and become the subject of loud roaring calumny by enemies. The shafts of envy may be hurled at him; the bitterness of persecution may pursue him; the spirit of malice and hate may hunt him down, but his song is,

"Yea, let men rage, since thou wilt spread
Thy shadowing wings around my head;
Since, in all pain, thy tender love
Will still my sure refreshment prove."

His heart is on the Cross; his eye is fixed on the recompense of reward; his ear is reverently attent only to the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," and to the promise, "Lo! I am with you alway."

He may have to toil to weariness—to suffer poverty and reproach and want. His children may cry with hunger, and his wife grow pale with suffering. Fatigue and exposure and sickness may be

his portion, yet “none of these things move him.” He counts not his life dear, and is always ready to be offered on the altar of duty. What to such a man is opposition or sacrifice? He is God’s by covenant and calling, and has pledged to him and for him the defences of heaven. He has

“Heart within, and God o’erhead ;”

and with “the world for his parish,” and Christ as his theme, he resists the roar of the thunder and the strife of the storm, and stands the Apennine of the moral world.

DISCOURSE II.

On Hearing the Word.

ON HEARING THE WORD.

“Take heed how ye hear.”—LUKE viii. 18.

“THERE was a time,” says an eloquent Scotch preacher, “when each revelation of the word of God had an introduction into this earth, which neither permitted men to doubt whence it came, nor wherefore it was sent.” As if the Almighty would summon his children to a just conception of the high audience to which they were to be admitted, and impress them with the reverent attention wherewith they should give heed to his communications, he was accustomed to announce these under circumstances that gave demonstration to both the one and the other.

Does he determine to make known his purpose toward Israel in bondage, and to inaugurate an instrument for their emancipation? “A flame of fire out of the midst of a bush,” burning, yet not consumed, arrests and makes reverent the attention of Moses as he stood at the base of Horeb. When, in the third month after they had gone forth out

of the land of Egypt, and as their tents were pitched before Sinai, he would make known his will, he made the thunder, and lightning, and cloud, and smoke, and sounding trumpet, and quaking mountain, his awful harbingers. When he would speak to a sacrilegious king, the hand of an invisible form came forth and left his purposes glowing in letters of flame on the walls of the palace.

In this way was he wont, in the olden time, to enforce conviction of the truth of his revelations, and to make the ear attentive to his messages.

But not so is it now With the advent of his Son, and the ushering in of the gospel dispensation, came the sealing of those wonderful visions, and the cessation of those startling miracles. He has left us in possession of the Holy Scriptures, and an appointed ministry, and a teaching Spirit; and by means of the faculties wherewith he has graciously endowed us, we are to gather from these a knowledge of his will and our duty. He has commissioned men—yes, *men*—men of like passions with yourselves, and therefore better prepared to minister to you than the angels themselves—these he has commissioned to make known his truth; to go out into the world in quest of its wanderers; to gather them into folds, and then feed them with the bread of life, even as the Good Shepherd did during his ministry among mankind. To this great work they should be consecrated, knowing nothing else, and devoting time, and talents, and

mouth, and pen, to the one task of enlightening the world and establishing it in the friendship of Heaven.

The awful responsibility that gathers around the pulpits of this nation is beyond our estimate. They are the Sinais and the Calvaries of the gospel age. The places where a Moses received the law, and a suffering Jesus expiated the sin of a condemned world, lie far back in the gloom of dead centuries: yet every pulpit, whether it stand in the opulent mart of trade or in the country—whether the sunshine stream in upon it through stained glass and costly hangings, as in our cities, or through broken panes and clapboard roofs, as is sometimes seen in less affluent neighborhoods—is, or should be, a reproduction of the law given on Sinai, and of the gospel dramatized on the hill of the crucifixion.

Around these pulpits the people gather to learn the lessons that pertain to the moral and the immortal man; and if, as the dispenser of truth, the preacher should so forget the trust given him as, through an indifference to the importance of acquiring a knowledge of that truth, or a recreancy in making it known, to leave the people in ignorance, or, what is worse, should he imbed within the soil of their minds the seeds of falsehood; should this be his course, terrible indeed will be the final auditing of his account.

But the preacher is not the only party in this responsibility. The hearer is equally concerned. The one is the artist, while the other sits for his

picture. Now, if the artist should be held to account for the manner in which he sketches, the sitter should be also for the way he receives the delineation, and for the improvement he makes of the portraiture.

Verily there is grievous wrong in the congregations of this land and the thronging worshippers of this age. There never was, perhaps, a time in the history of the gospel, when it received more of formal approval than now; when her temples were crowded with more fashionable audiences, and when the external decencies, the studied and habitual proprieties of religion, were more universally acknowledged; and yet, who does not feel that the preaching of this day is not comparable in vital effect and practical power with the preaching of our fathers!

While we would not shield the pulpits from any censure they may deserve, we believe that the hearers—those who look up to them from Sabbath to Sabbath—come far short of that large profit to which they are called, because of inattention to the word preached.

We come to-day to offer you some rules, the observance of which will, we think, make the attendance on the ministry conducive to your intellectual and moral culture. These directions will be based on the adaptation of the gospel to such culture. We hold that the ministrations of the pulpit, to be eminently effective, must be addressed to the head and heart; that the pulpit should both

enlighten and warm the multitudes that seek it; and that, in attempting to give you a directory for hearing, we must include instructions pertaining to your intellectual as well as your moral nature.

And before entering on our proposed task, it may not be inappropriate to say something on the claims of the pulpit on the people at large.

To preach is to discourse publicly on a religious subject. This custom can be traced back to an early period in the history of mankind; for we read that Enoch "prophesied" or preached. Among the patriarchs, the worship of God was confined to households mainly, so that every father was a preacher, and every family a Church. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness;" and from the time of the flood to the Babylonian captivity, Moses, and Joshua, and Amos, and a multitude of others, were commissioned to instruct the people in the way of salvation. After the return of the Jews, Nehemiah and Ezra are mentioned as faithful preachers; and it was through the industry and labors of the latter that the books of the holy canon were collated and arranged in their present form.

Read the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, and learn the effect of Ezra's preaching on the people of that day! Such was the force of truth, and such the comfort it shed on the multitude, that they wept for joy. And what a sea of faces was spread out before the preacher! and how different that scene of fifty thousand weeping and rejoicing hearers, from that of a few academics gathered around Plato, as

he, in the same age, instructed them in the speculations of a cold philosophy! His was an oratory that had much of intellectual ring and musical utterance, and had the power to charm the listener; while Ezra and the ancient prophets had what was mightier—a tone whose power came burdened with the sanctions of an unveiled eternity and the interests of immortality, and which could therefore carry the souls of hearers into the very presence-chamber of God.

At last the Great Preacher came, and by his profound earnestness, warm sympathy, and masterful eloquence, took captive the affections and won the obedience of all classes and conditions of men. In him was exemplified all that was wise in instruction and wonderful in oratory. His eloquence poured light upon the understanding, and awoke strange throbbings in the souls of his listeners. His style was simple, yet full of majesty; his images were beautiful, lifelike, and touching; his manner sparkled with severity, or glowed with kindness, as occasion demanded; and under the fascination of his speech the people exclaimed, “Never man spake like this man!”

Whether we behold him in the synagogue, disputing with doctors, or on the mountain, with the eager multitude closing about him, or upon the beach, with the breaking waves murmuring at his feet, and the air still, like starlight, around—no matter when, or where, or to whom he preached—his wisdom won the mind, while his manner, so

fraught with meekness and sympathy, compelled the admiration and love of the people.

When he had ascended on high, those chosen by him went forth as his representatives; and from that period his truth has been propagated by means of a ministry called by him, and anointed by his gracious Spirit for the high and holy work. The existence of a Church supposes that of a ministry also; a ministry authorized to claim the constant blessing and abiding presence of its great Head, and having a claim on the scattered membership of the Church everywhere.

The preaching of the gospel is not a sacrament. It is not invested with the sanctity which God has seen proper to throw around baptism and the holy communion; yet we do insist that it is one of his ordinances, and that to throw neglect upon it by inattention is to incur the just displeasure of Heaven.

We deem it no unimportant charge that this ordinance is so lightly esteemed, not only by many in the world, but many in the Church also. It is a sad comment on the piety of a community or a people that the iron tongue in the belfry should send forth its solemn summons to the temple of God, and find multitudes disregarding of its call, and, what attaches a still deeper guilt than mere disobedience, devoting the hour for service—an hour that should find them gratefully and joyfully attent to the message of grace—to the mischievous gossip of the social circle. It is to sin against God, and betrays an unconcern for his cause and

the welfare of humanity. It is to offer a foul insult to the Author of salvation. It is to heap indifference on one of the mightiest bulwarks of our country; and demands, even as it deserves, the withering rebuke of our common patriotism; for the preaching of the word, in connection with the observance of our Sabbath service, is a sure defence of what we hold dear—the civil institutions of this nation.

Its influence on the morals, and, we may add, the intellect of a people, is beyond estimate. It is the great battery of truth, and, when levelled against infidelity and immorality, will make its power felt. You may select the most abandoned of a community, and if you can bring them into regular communication with the faithful ministrations of the gospel, their saving influence will soon declare itself. The gospel is the word of the Lord, and when preached with any thing like an adequate sense of responsibility, and with fidelity, will not return void. It will move upon the great deep of human hearts, and although the emotion excited may be concealed from the eye of the preacher, the eye of the Eternal beholds it, and the Divine Spirit will brood over the heaving void. The ear of the preacher may hear no voice of alarm, no cry of penitence, yet the invisible throng that minister to the heirs of salvation will be joyful spectators of these witnesses of the power of the gospel. It is an apparatus of power, and will cleave its way through the delusions by which unbelief is accus-

tomed to entrench itself. It is a sounding trumpet, arousing the dead energies of peoples and persons by its appeals, and filling the world with its encouraging evangel.

That heart must be cold, and that mind imbecile, indeed, that can hear these appeals unmoved, or that can listen to these evangelists and feel no quickening of slumbering energies, no rousing of dormant faculties, nor heavenward direction given to wandering affections; who can hear, as he will from the pulpit, of his relationship with God the Eternal, and of his alliance with angels, and of his heirship to an immortality of unmeasured blessedness, and not awake to something like a conception of the grandeur of his being and the glory of his heritage.

We are induced to dwell thus long on this ordinance of God because we are apprehensive that a majority of hearers place too light a value on it. They do not, we fear, sufficiently esteem it, either as a means of perpetuating our liberties, or as an instrumentality for an enlarged knowledge of the truth and the universal dissemination of the principles of religion. Its absolute value to civil government, to humanity, and to religion, could be adequately measured only in its removal; and yet, in view of such a calamity, who among us does not shudder! Remove this means of enlightenment, this bulwark of our nation, and the banners of our faith would trail in the dust, our political machinery would be broken, and religion would be reduced to

a degradation but little superior to the Islamism of Mohammed, or the corrupting worship of the pagan idolater. Would you have proof of what we are urging upon you? Turn to the East, where the morning of salvation first broke upon the world, and behold it! The curious traveller, as he gropes his way amid the ruins of ancient cities, finds in mouldering and decaying columns, crumbling arches, and exhumed marbles, over whose inscriptions the antiquarian bends in earnest endeavor at decipherment, mournful proofs of what we have asserted.

You, my brethren, who have lived in the use of gospel privileges, without considering their value or estimating your obligation, have but a feeble conception of what a fearful desolation would follow were our pulpits abolished and our preachers silenced. It would be to dry up the fountains of national prosperity and human happiness. Indeed, we would welcome any calamity that could befall us, as a people, with less of fear than the one we are now considering. Let famine emaciate our population: let barrenness curse our soil: let pestilence people our cemeteries: let war sacrifice our kindred, and decimate the ranks of our young men: let treason enter our camps: let storms wreck our navies: let flames envelop our cities: let all the curses of a just God be outpoured upon us, rather than this direst of all visitations! Amid whatever of misfortune that may come upon us, or of judgment that may overtake us, for our national sins,

let us still have our temples to which we can repair in our sorrow, and around whose altars we can bow in supplication for mercy! These, whether found amid the splendor of cities or the silence of the country, would remind us of a habitation in heaven, where the voice of oppression cannot alarm, and where the "wicked cease to trouble, and the weary are at rest," for ever! But take from us these

"Bulwarks of our native land,"

and you have shorn us of our strength, and made us powerless among the peoples of the world. Our hold upon the heart of humanity would be loosened, and our influence gone. Reason would take the place of revelation: passion would empty the soul of virtue, and all that gives greatness to our nature and happiness to our homes would depart: the foundations of our greatness would be removed: the ramparts around our altars to freedom would be prostrated: the springs of our peace would be imbibited, poisoned, and our lisping babes doomed to weep over the pale ghost of civil and religious freedom!

If preaching be so important, why, it may be asked, has it done so little, and what is the reason of its comparative inefficiency? We verily believe that a large measure of the guilt is at the door of the hearer. Not that the house of God is empty when the word is preached—not that there is wanting the semblance of attention. No, no! The

temple is crowded many times; and the riveted gaze and the tearful eye give promise that the scattered seed is being earthed in productive soil; yet the light laugh, and the spirit of criticism as to the pulpit performance, that follow, and the eagerness with which the people return to their traffic, their amusements, and their worldly folly, tell that either the soil was not good, or that the vegetating and growing process has been sadly hindered.

Ah, my brethren, it is but little worth that the church is filled to overflowing, and that thousands hang silent and breathless on the utterances of the preacher—that the power of oratory is acknowledged—that the orator is applauded, and the singing pronounced faultless! This is but a poor recompense to him who, in much prayer and by protracted vigils, has struggled to know the truth, that he might declare it to the people in power, and witness its conquests among them. To such a man, it brings agony to the soul to witness the people who on Sabbath were so attentive and so full of hopeful sympathy, returning to the idols of their worship, bowing to the shrines of mammon and pleasure, with a devotion, in proof that the message from the pulpit, however earnestly and honestly delivered, had left no other effect than such as a pleasant dream, or a soft melody at nightfall, might have produced.

I stand before you as one not insensible to words of encouragement. They have often come to me opportunely, when I have felt faint and weary from

“the loud roar of calumny, and the petty wrongs of the paltry few;” yet I take the Judge of all to witness, that I deem these a meagre reward for the efforts I put forth to know the truth I feel commissioned to unfold. These, however gratifying, cannot be received as the fulfilment of that glorious promise, “Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,” which has shone down upon me in the darkest hours of my life. I come to preach to you; and while I would gladly hear from you the voice of approval, yet not until I can witness such displays of power as will give promise of souls to be garnered amid the singing of the harvest-home song of the world will I be satisfied.

Be this my ambition, then, as I minister to you, so to preach as that the doctrines made known may prove to you the “power of God unto salvation;” and be it yours, also, to so receive the truth as that it may make you free indeed!

Assuming, for the present, that the gospel on which you are to attend will be faithfully preached—as I trust it will—the question that has most essential connection with your duty and with your interest, refers to the manner in which you are to give heed to the text: “Take heed how ye hear.” If you would give obedience to this exhortation, you must come to the house of God with your thoughts restrained from worldly themes and pursuits, with all your faculties awake, and in preparation to listen to the proposals of God’s ambassadors, and with your souls possessed of these

sanctified feelings and emotions, befitting you as auditors of Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean. You should come with a due appreciation of the great privileges to which you are admitted, of the dignity of your position as one communing with the King of kings, and of the certain connection of your eternal destiny with the words you are to hear.

The absence of these preparations for meeting your Maker and listening to the negotiations he makes to you through his ambassadors, will make your Sabbath assembling a curse, instead of a blessing, and cause the preaching on which you attend to become as the letter which killeth, when it should prove to you as the Spirit which giveth life.

But for your better understanding and profit, we will leave this course of general direction, and offer you a few special rules for hearing, which we believe will make our relation, as pastor and people, one of usefulness.

First, then, *you should hear the gospel, by whomsoever preached, with openness of understanding.*

And by this we mean, that this mental habitude should consist in a condition of receptivity for the truth as it may commend itself to the mind and conscience.

This condition of the mind can only be obtained by a sequestration of your thoughts from every foreign subject, and their concentration on the topic under discussion. It includes also the duty of dispossessing yourself of all prejudice against,

and of all prepossession in favor of, the particular view of truth the preacher may be presenting. The ear should not be cheated into undue partiality, the understanding should not be given to partisan bonds, and the will should be free from every thing like disaffection. If you go to the house of God with a hungering for the bread of life, a thirst for the water that satisfies, anxious only to be fed, and to have the thirst of your famishing soul slaked, you should compel your mind into this condition of fairness—should seat yourself before God's messenger with your understanding open to the truth and accessible to the influence of that word that is potent with energy, and which, if it be not wantonly hindered, will, under the conduct of that Spirit by which it is accompanied, guide its subjects to a knowledge, a saving knowledge of the truth.

This frame of mind, we venture to say, is different from that with which most persons attend on the preaching of the word. The unbeliever, for instance, goes as one armed for a contest with the truth. He listens merely as a polemic, disputing at every step. Sophistry and artifice are in constant attendance through his summons, and that, too, to fortify his understanding, and to cover his conscience as with a shield. It is not, therefore, a matter of surprise that to such a man the truth should prove unavailing, and that he should be given over, even while giving respectful attendance

on the ministry of the word, to “believe a lie and be damned.”

And so it is with the worldly-minded and the pleasure-loving, who regularly seat themselves in the house of God on Sabbath. They come with minds fully made up not to yield to the persuasions of the preacher, resolved to wrestle against the entreaties of truth, and determined on stifling every serious impression, and on resisting all exhortations to that better life to which the preacher and the Spirit of God may summon them.

Are not these before me to-day? and do not your own consciences, as well as the past experience of all of you, give testimony to the solemn charge which, in the name of my Master, I bring against you? Ah! if I could but break this spell by which you have become enchanted—could but dispel this illusion by which you have been kept from a blessedness far beyond that which the gods of your worship have ever given, happy would I be!

“But feeble my compassion proves,
And can but weep where most it loves;”

and I can only pray God to bless the warning, and make it the means of your disenchantment, before you go beyond the voice of our Sabbath bells and the sound of that gospel which to this hour you have so madly resisted.

This want of openness of understanding has a

large place, although in a different form, among Christians also. Too many of these—we will say most of them—attend upon preaching as members of a sect, and resolved on receiving nothing as the gospel unless it be fully endorsed by the Church to which they belong, with minds fully made up to reject every thing that is not embraced in their liturgy, or confession of faith, or articles of religion. There is, as we verily believe, in this age, and among all denominations, a vassalage to creeds most hurtful to the cause of God. It opposes the progress of truth, because it puts away all individuality, and, as a consequence, all personal responsibility, from the hearer. We have no war against creeds: indeed, they are absolutely necessary, as declarations of distinguishing doctrines and exponents of denominational polity. Still they may be carried too far—may be abused; and it is against these abuses, this cuirassing a man, as he reads God's word or hears it preached, in the close-fitting armor of religious partyism and of blind sectarianism, that we speak. Its tendency is to put away from us the spirit of charity—that grace that is beyond all others most to be sought, and which the apostle says is “above all.” If not watched, it will destroy that unity which ought to bind all Christians, and through whose universal prevalence and warm and liberal exercise the hope of the millennium is to be realized. “Our theology,” wrote that admirable essayist and pious Baptist, John Foster, “is the theology of faction;” and he might

have added that the hearers of that theology, when it is preached, are, however unwilling they may be to confess it, factional hearers.

We are free to admit that the pulpit is in the van of this great wrong. We know that it is too often but the oracle of sects, instead of being the oracle of truth: that its high-priests are, some of them, not so much concerned with having their lips touched with coals from off God's altar as having them wet with the gall of bigotry; and the earnest and daily cry of every burdened soul should be for the coming of that day when the pulpit of this and every other nation shall cease to wail out the speech of a dotard theology—a theology of bitter denunciation and of partisan zeal; and, shaking off the trammels that bind it, be consecrated to the work of unfolding the truth in charity, and of preaching an evangel of large affections—a faith that will take in its arms all whose lives wear the seal of pureness!

That day may be dawning. We believe it is. The morning harbingers are already visible to the eye of love; yet the noon has not come, nor will it, perhaps, until many who pray for it, and preach its need, shall have been hunted down, because of their devotion to this hope.

With many of our most pious church-goers—men in whose struggles for higher sanctity we have all confidence, and to whose peculiar opinions we would pay willing deference—the preaching with which they are most gratified, and to which they

give most earnest attention, is that in which some of the more prominent and distinguishing doctrines of their Church are set forth in precise accordance with their Church creed, and in a spirit which, however they may esteem it or call it, is a blending of bigotry and dogmatism.

We trust we are not misunderstood: that this protest against an abuse of creedism will not be interpreted as an opposition either to creeds or the faithful preaching of the doctrines held by any branch of the visible body of Christ. These should be presented in the way of explanation and defence. They are believed to have been taught by Jesus; to have been stated by apostles; to have been testified to by the noble company of martyrs and confessors; to be replete with Divine energy; and to be destined to prove, whenever they are faithfully published, the power of God unto salvation; but to present these, as is too much the fashion, in the prescribed diagnoses of Church creeds, and in glorification of such creeds, rather than as emanations from the Divine wisdom, it is *this* that we oppose. To do this is to leave unstirred the great deep of the hearer's nature, and to make preaching itself a savor of death instead of life. It will drive the intellectual and thoughtful out into the alluring fields of rationalism, and leave the masses unenlightened on those subjects in which of all others they most need instruction.

But to return to the hearer: this preëccupation of the mind with theologic opinions—this marriage

of the understanding with favorite dogmas—will make all preaching that does not harmonize with your modes of thought and preconceived conclusions unprofitable. In that instance you will have sat down to listen with foregone opinions as to what you are to hear, and having thus fenced in your judgment, the word, be it ever so living and warm, will neither stir your faculties nor reach your affections. A cast-iron prejudice against what may be the truth will do away with every thing like devotion; bigotry will get what belongs to charity, and so the preaching that, received with openness of understanding, would be to you the “fine full harmony of heaven’s melodious voice,” falls upon your ear with tones of dissonance, and leaves your heart filled with partisan zeal instead of Christian love.

We pray you, therefore, to break this chain, if you have been content to wear its fetters; and in all your future audiences with God, through his ministry, be that ministry Catholic or Protestant—be it from the followers of Calvin or Wesley, or no matter whom, so it come from earnest souls—go up to the place of ministration, not as a sectary, but as a disciple of Jesus, hungering for the truth, no matter by what name nor how rudely it may be sent; anxious for light, and caring but little who opens it to your vision, so it prove a true beam from the eternal fountain;—go up with the belief that whenever a true prophet stands up for the maintenance of the truth, God will abide with

him; that, if that prophet be earnest, the Eternal will ray out light to his beseechful soul, and that whosoever may be ministered to by such a one will catch the showering splendor, and find his nature gathering a blessed warmth from his ministrations.

Hearing in this way, you will soon begin to feel an infinite enlargement of your nature, because of an infinite and humble receptivity; and should the preaching on which you attend be equally open and catholic and earnest, yours will be a growth to which we dare not set limits. Not only will your harvest be gathered while listening from Sabbath to Sabbath to the word, but when you have gone from the sanctuary, in your lonely hours, memory will pour from her storehouse treasures garnered from such ministrations. You will have heard in bonds to no sect, but in openness of understanding and in simplicity of heart. Your regeneration, your Christian birth, will not have been into Church creeds, but into the mind of God and the Spirit of God. The imperfect within you, and of which all have such painful consciousness, will begin to yearn for the perfect, and the great God himself will come down to meet and direct your aspirations. The "surges of an everlasting nature" will be heard sounding through the unfathomed abysses of your souls, and you will begin to live in the highest and noblest realization of life. Truth will rise before you in newer and diviner forms, and win from you a deep and adoring reverence. No longer then will your life-garment present an

unsightly patch-work: it will have become a robe of Divine unity, and your relation to God and your kind, instead of being slavish and selfish, will be one of ineffable fellowship.

2. *A second direction we would offer is, that you hear with manly independence; with a profound conviction of, and respect for, your personality.*

We desire your especial recognition of this duty; for without due attention to it, what we have said, if followed, will cause you many times to receive error, and will expose you to untold danger. While, therefore, you seek to maintain a receptive state of mind, you should preserve the recollection of your personality and of your segregation from all others, in respect to your inner life, your conscience, and your responsibility to God. This conviction, if it obtain its proper place in the very centre of your being, will lead to that manly independence in thinking, and to that inviolable adherence to truth and right in doing, which, and which only, can make harmonious the inward and outward life. It is by this process and this adjustment that you will be able to preserve the sacredness of conscience, and to make full preparation for that solemn inquest into human conduct to which every human being is appointed.

He who has reached this knowledge—who has recognized the awful truth that he is a person, distinct from all others, and from all else in the whole world, and that, in this individual sense, he is going, solitary and unattended, to the bar of God—

has reached a great point in self-knowledge; and will, if true to this attainment, find in it the mightiest helps to his salvation. It is indeed a great epoch in a man's life when this truth stands fully disclosed to his consciousness; when from the deep abysm of his being he hears testimony to it; when the soul, having compressed intellect into conscience, extorts from the latter its acknowledgment. Ah! it may place a shadow on many of the garish visions that lead but to bewilder. It may force him who feels it in upon himself, and give to song, and mirth, and even laughter, the tone of mockery. It may bring to those who feel it what the mad reveller and the votary of pleasure may call loneliness; yet he who realizes its solemn truth, and who is incited by such realization to live, not for the present, but for the future, is made the happier thereby. His loneliness is not that of the sad solitary, but of the earnest thinker. His communion may not be with the gay pageants of which the carnival of life is composed, but it is with the mystery of his being—the solemnity of life here, and the grandeur and glory of life hereafter.

Turning his eye within, he beholds an interminable continent of thought and feeling, grand even in its wild wilderness-state, and sublime in its very solitude; and as he seeks to explore this unsurveyed continent, this unexplored wilderness, this untravelled solitude of being and thought, neither the prattle of the silly nor the babble of the vain dis-

turbs him. To such as waste life in the excitement of its great Vanity Fair, he may seem lonely. The gravity which high thought may write on his brow, and the seriousness that communion with great mysteries may give to his speech, may be mistaken for sadness; yet such a man shares a blessedness which the high-born angels might well covet.

Tell me not that he whose face has lost its imprint of carelessness from self-communion, and whose words come laden with awe because of the dread unfolding of his nature, is lonely! O tell me not that he is unhappy! He has only passed the threshold of being, and is beginning to live understandingly and enjoyingly. He has learned that he is a person with intellectual and moral and spiritual idiosyncrasies; that his complex life is all responsible, and that it is destined, in the coming eternities, to return to him with scorpion thongs or in heavenly blessedness, just as he now makes it fruitful of evil or good. Such a man has learned the great lesson of sublime thought, and whatever of seriousness his brow may wear, his soul, if he live truly, shares an unceasing jubilee. His very solitude abounds with rapture, and, next to God, nature becomes his most revered teacher. Beside her great streams, in the shadows of her solemn mountains, in the vastness of her great solitudes, and beneath the splendor of her shining worlds, he hears voices which, though they come not to the vain and light-hearted, are borne to him, telling him what he is and what he may become. •

Carry this knowledge of your personality to the house of God, and while there let it prompt to that manliness of thought, that humble independence as to opinion, which neither partakes of vain self-conceit on the one hand, nor a surrender of individuality on the other, and which might properly be called a free yet reverent exercise of our individual reason.

Fanaticism may run riot over reason, and even ill-attempered enthusiasm itself sometimes dreams that the temple of truth can be built only on the ruins of reason; yet this would be to overturn all true religion. If reason be excluded, who does not see that the foundation on which we are to rest our hopes of the future must be vague and undefined? There is nothing, then, left us by which to define what is sufficient for a foundation; or even if something professing to be a sufficient basis on which to plant our future hopes were discovered, and even agreed on, what confidence could be reposed in its sufficiency if reason were abolished? Take away this faculty, by which one may have spiritual apprehension of the truth, and to what, we inquire, could a revelation of that truth address itself? If you cover the soul with a silence such as would brood over it were the oracle of reason demolished, all the appeals which from his creation Heaven has been sending to man could not awaken him. The old ages might speak from their hoary mist; the coming judgment might send its trumpet-voices, waxing louder and more terrible than the

blasts reverberating amid the fire-cloud, and the darkening smoke of Sinai, all summoning him to articulation, yet the dread silence would remain unbroken.

The prodigies of the Almighty, such as the deliverance of the dead from their graves, the convulsions of the mount of crucifixion, the rending of the temple-vail, and the eclipse of the heavens, would all have been as unavailing as though witnessed only by frightened beasts; and all because of the absence of that spiritual faculty whose high office it is to sit in judgment on what purports to be the truth of God. Take this away from religion, and the voices through which it speaks to us would come to us with nothing clearer nor more satisfactory than the shrieks of the fanatical priests of Baal thrown upon the air in frenzied clamor from the summit of Carmel. Give us this faculty though, and those voices come to us certain and overwhelming. Kindle this primitive light in the alien soul—let it burn in the weltering chaos, and then when God speaks his voice is recognized. When he shows his glory by the fissured rock, or flames out from the supernatural bush, or thunders from a cloudy Sinai, or expires on a veiled Calvary, we see and feel that it is God, and hasten to give obedience to the wonderful message.

The very fact that the Almighty has revealed his truth to man, and commanded obedience under penalties the most severe, is proof that he has given us some inward faculty of apprehension.

Without such an inner constitution, where would be his justice? The Church, in her expanding missionary enterprises, gives testimony to her belief in this constitution; and in her efforts to send the truth to pagan idolaters and wondering savages, she recognizes among the heathen the existence of this faculty.

He is mistaken, then, who supposes that he is honoring the truth by attempting to rear her temple upon a prostrate reason. She can rise to her full proportions, and wear her crown of glory, only by honoring reason.

It is the prerogative of this great faculty to sit in judgment on what purports to be a revelation from God, to examine the proofs on which such a revelation rests its claims to divinity, and to put forth all befitting endeavor to find out the true sense of its declarations—all, too, in prayerful dependence on God for the gracious guidance of his Holy Spirit.

This, now, is the faculty which, as hearers of the gospel, we would have you cultivate and maintain free from vassalage to mere human opinions, doctrines, and teachings. While you give attention to the messages of the pulpit with an understanding open to conviction, and with a nature simple and true to itself, remember that you are bound to receive nothing as true, unless those who make it known to you satisfy your reason that it comes from God.

Thousands who hear preaching in this and other

Christian lands are sadly neglectful in this respect. Many have surrendered their minds to the keeping of councils and ecclesiastical courts and priestly interpretation. They have merged their individuality, as to thinking, into the opinions of the ministry on which they attend; having no clearly-defined views of their own of the gospel; giving assent to doctrines, not because of conviction produced by personal examination, but because the file leaders in their clerical ranks have declared them true; and not unfrequently becoming fiercely intolerant in the ratio that they are stupidly ignorant.

When will the time come to this favored land when the laity in all her Churches, having shaken off their unconcern, will engage their powers in the task of knowing for themselves the truth as it is in Jesus? when, esteeming that truth, not because it lies parcelled off in some of the articles of their creed, but for the nobler reason that it came from the mind of Jesus, and is smoking with his blood poured out for its maintenance, they will seek to imbue their minds with its clear light and to penetrate their hearts with its saving warmth; when our Christian temples everywhere will be filled with men and women, impatient, not so much for the adorning of eloquence, as for the solid and forceful gospel; when the people, the professing Christian people, in city and in rural places, will give to the word of the Most High a becoming place in their intellectual regards—will find in the songs of David

sweeter lays than were sung by Pindar, and in the tragic numbers of Job a grandeur and a harmony unequalled by Sophocles; when the thousands that go up to the mount of instruction, amid the stillness of our Sabbaths, will summon all their inner faculties, and invoke the descending of the Spirit to assist them, as they go forth in their thankfulness, to meet and commune with God; when every Sabbath assembly will present the spectacle of an earnest, hungering multitude, each member animated by a common spirit—a spirit that would know and do the will of the Master of assemblies; when the soul, rather than the body, will be made ready to meet her Maker; when, clothing herself in her garments of simplicity and reverence, she will open her understanding, refresh her memory, arouse her conscience, kindle her imagination, hallow her affections, and thus make the hour of her temple-service a festival of joy!

Ah! my brethren, when that day comes, heaven will not be remote from our now wandering and sorrowing world. It will lie around us, and encircle our souls as the great wide atmosphere does our bodies.

The Christian ministry will then have a work absorbing it, from which sectarian service will be excluded. The Christian Church then, in all her militant divisions, true to her instincts, will arm herself against intolerance, and eagerly press forward toward the impersonal and illimitable, hav-

ing throbs of sympathy and words of encouragement for all who are struggling up into a divine life.

Then all, leaders and people, preachers and hearers, will unite in sending into the open ear of Heaven a litany, earnest, harmonious, and resonant with a grand catholic unity, for the coming of the time when the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and when he shall reign for ever and ever!"

Whatever discouragement may look upon us intimidatingly, as we contemplate the arrival of that period, we have faith in God that it is hastening. We may not live to see it: our eyes may never behold the unfolding and perfecting of that vision which

"Kings and prophets waited for,
But died without the sight;"

yet the full noon, to which the present is the brightening morn, will come; for the promise of God is sure. We already see the light of its approach kindling a hopeful radiance in the long-darkened homes of humanity, and causing the eyes of the good to grow brighter as they gaze.

We live in eventful times. The aurora of a glorious day is breaking upon the world—one that, we believe, will extinguish, by its splendor, the light which philosophy has kindled, and by which she is now dazzling the nations with a lustre, as false as

it will prove fading. The steps of the age gone by were wonderful. Its earnest men solved problems which, for centuries, had baffled human thought. They became true interpreters of the mystic speech of Plato and Socrates. They brought out, in clear and distinct form, the old Bible doctrine of conversion, and gave personal illustration that the Divine would enter the human in all the entireness of sanctification. All honor to the Zindendorfs and Wesleys of the past, and all glory to their Heavenly Captain, who led them on! The same Divine leader is still at the head of the Christian column—the Christian hearers of our age; and therefore we take courage, as his cry of *Onward!* comes pealing to our ears.

Men of God are speaking and writing. They are scattering the seed broadcast—are sowing beside all waters, and soon trees of righteousness will fill the four quarters of the globe with their waving boughs. The fire-pillars of truth glow along the hot wilderness path, and the toiling pilgrims bind their sandals on afresh, and begin anew. Never did the Hebrew desert ring with grander anthems than are heard by this generation. Nor are our jubilant songs without authority. We sing, because we are hopeful. To us, even as to Israel of olden time, the mountain summits of a goodly land rise before us. We have a joy in the vision that holds us in its thrall which they know not; for the hills toward which we bend our way, not only gleam with the fire-robe of glory, but are covered

all over with God's angels. From their far-off dwelling-place, they beckon us to come! We will be with them soon! Until then, brethren, we must be taught by earthly lips! "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear!"

DISCOURSE III.

On Hearing the Word.

ON HEARING THE WORD.

“Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.”—LUKE viii. 18.

WHAT we said in the previous discourse on the subject of hearing the word, had respect to the intellect rather than the heart of the hearer. We propose, now, to treat the subject in its relation to the moral or spiritual man, rather than to the mind.

It is a thing not at all improbable, my brethren, for a man to esteem the gospel; to prize an earnest, enlightened ministry; to be uniform in his attendance on such a ministry; to conform to such rules for hearing as we have ventured to lay down; to receive much of intellectual profit through the preaching of the gospel, and yet be far removed from a condition of salvation: He may do all that we have insisted on, and do it with reverence too, and still his moral nature may remain wholly without culture.

Hearers of this class make up a large proportion of every congregation. They are men and women

worthy of respect, and usually share largely of the esteem of pastor and church officers. We mourn for them. We mourn that, going as far as they do, and participating to the extent that many of them do in the intellectual pleasure of having unfolded to them so vast a system as the gospel, they should content themselves short of that more enlarged satisfaction which connects itself with the preaching of the word, when the hearer has made befitting preparation, not only in mind, but in heart also. We therefore invoke the attention of such, while we offer some directions on the subject of having the moral nature prepared for hearing the word.

We lay it down as an admitted truth, that whatever exercises will give a man a realization of what he is, and of his true relation to the All-Father, must necessarily affect his moral nature for good, and be the means of bringing to him a large profit. The want of this realization is one of the greatest hindrances to a man's salvation. Its absence puts a vail over an important truth—a truth which, when fully disclosed to the consciousness, incites to action. Let a man only get a faithful view of himself and of his relation to God, and, in addition, let his intellectual and moral nature be so wrought upon as to force from him an acknowledgment of the same, and he has overcome the most formidable obstruction to his salvation. He has, in such an instance, torn off the covering of delusion, and not only sees his condition, but is impelled straightway to seek some remedy for that

condition. Hence it is that those habitudes of mental and moral being in which he gives audience to the ministry of the word, and which lend their aid in giving this faithful portraiture of himself, will be found wonderful auxiliaries to that work whereunto the gospel has been sent and the ministry appointed—the salvation of his soul.

With these general views, we proceed now to those directions that relate to the spiritual, rather than the intellectual.

1. *And, first, we observe in this connection that you should hear with hearts and minds profoundly imbued with sentiments of piety.*

This frame of heart and mind is proper at all times. Its absence, however, is without excuse, and involves in serious guilt at a time so solemn as is the hour of our entrance into God's house, to hear words whereby we may be saved.

A feeling of gratitude to the Father of all good, for his word and ministry, should be prominent in our affections. It should be in the mind of the hearer, not as a mere remembrance, affecting the memory, but as an emotion, taking a deep and abiding place in the soul, and drawing him with overmastering force to Him who has been thus gracious. Whoever has this, may not always be able to give such expression of it as the feeling may prompt to; yet, if it be possessed in any thing like becoming measure, it will not fail to inspire him with devotion during the sermon to which he may be listening. It will leave room for none of

that criticism in which many are wont to indulge. The heart in which it abides has but little desire to find fault with the style and manner of the preacher, and no time for that idle survey of the congregation to which so many are addicted. Such a man, on entering the holy place, fills his mind with thoughts of his unworthiness of such condescension as God has shown him ; with thoughts of his guilt, his ignorance, his far-wanderings from a Father's kindness and a Saviour's love, and the voices of entreaty sent to him by that Father and that Saviour, urging him, by all that he has forfeited, to return and be loyal.

In addition, there should be a distrust of human ability in the work of understanding, in and of itself, the word when preached. Our intellectual and moral nature has undergone sad defacings from sin, and when left without Divine aid will attain to but a feeble comprehension of God's mind, and will be disposed to most lamentable misinterpretations of that mind. It needeth to be aided by Divine grace at all times, and at no time more than when it places itself in the temple of the Most High as an auditor to his truth. Its bondage to evil, and the darkness which, like a thick cloud, has obscured the brightness of its original shining, together with the deceiving voices which Satan causes to speak amid that woeful gloom, make it essential to the hearer that he lend his ear to the ministrations of the Sabbath, in the constant exercise of this self-distrust.

We forewarn you, that in all this we mean, not that you should at any time undervalue your nature. We concede all that our article of religion teaches. We believe it all; yet we cannot sympathize with the spirit in which this picture is often drawn in the pulpit and Church-literature of the times. We prefer to use words, not of apology for the bondage in which our fallen humanity groans, but of sympathy for it in that bondage. Low as it has been sunk by sin, and bowed as are its subjects—subjects that were made in the image of God—by chains that eat into its very life, and hold it in miserable thralldom, still, in all of this sin and degradation and vassalage, we cherish for it an unspeakable reverence. We revere it for what it once was, and for what, through the grace of God in Christ Jesus, it may yet be. We revere it for the noble faculties wherewith a gracious God has endowed it, the elements of good he has implanted there, and for those mighty endeavors which, through this given good, it makes for truth, and knowledge, and imperishable virtue. For these germs, however unfruitful and even unblossoming they may be, and are, in many dissatisfied souls, we regard human nature everywhere with a high reverence, and will not exult over its frailty. We will not speak of it in language of un pitying denunciation and coarse invective. No! no! While we blame, we would weep; while we condemn, we would encourage; for, beneath all the discernible rubbish, there have been placed great powers, vast capabili-

ties; and these, if cleansed by the blood of the Crucified, and rightly educated, will bring to all earnest souls a heritage of untold and immeasurable good.

Noble though as are these powers, they have been so perverted as to make an unaided effort to know what is truth an enterprise fraught with extremest danger. The great minds whose struggles after a knowledge of God have been recorded in the Scriptures, were deeply impressed with the need of help; and, because of this conviction, we read their registered prayers for spiritual enlightenment, and their beseeching cries for Divine wisdom. You, who have been most anxious for certainty as to what the will of God is on those questions that pertain to a godly life, find plentiful testimony in your own history to the fact that the human mind needeth to be enlightened, before it can adventure with any thing of hopeful certainty along the domain of Divine revelation. Do you not even now recall your wrestlings with God in secret for guidance? your trembling hesitancy as you attempted duty, fearful that after all you might have mistaken the path? your indecision, when you would arrive at seeming divergencies, during the pursuance of your journey? the faltering that attended your steps, as you advanced in doctrine? the fluttering wing wherewith you attempted to rise into higher altitudes of faith? and the sad disquiet, and oftentimes the throbbing heart, with which you went on in the way of Christian experience? These accom-

paniments, which, if you have been an honest, earnest seeker of salvation, have attended your efforts thus far, are humbling evidences of your insufficiency to know duty, so long as God withholds from the eyes of your understanding "the healthful influence of his Holy Spirit."

This evidence accumulates when sought for among the unregenerate. Look around, and behold the sad perversion of their faculties, their lamentable misdirection; and see also with what a lavish waste they have expended their energies on the works of God, to the complete neglect of his word; and, what adds to their guilt, expended often only in the gratification of the lower instincts of their nature. O! what ingratitude is chargeable on the great-minded of this and former ages, when we look at their zeal in analyzing nature, in torturing her into a reluctant confession of her mysteries, in consecrating the wealth of imagination and of fancy to the task of portraying her beauties, and then remember how few have employed their great powers of mind in knowing the word of the Lord, and in unfolding its wondrous meaning to the world! There is no want of poets who sing of nature, from the grandly-rolling world above them to the smallest atom, rocked in its cradle of sunbeams. We have our philosophers too, who grow gray with thought over problems of mind and matter, and who labor to faintness and waste themselves to wanness, in their endeavors to find solutions. Men of science there are who bury

themselves in laboratories, and supplicate from nature a revelation of her most occult laws, and of her deepest mysteries. We have our *litterateurs* also, whose lives are devoted to communion with the voices that speak to them across the waste of centuries, and with the vital minds of their own times. We have all these, and more; and yet how few men and women among all the intellectual activities of this generation are there who are training their minds for the one absorbing purpose of knowing the mind of God, and of preparing their souls for heaven! with the noble aim of consecrating reason, imagination, fancy, and whatever else of gift or of acquisition they may have, to such an exhibition of the Divine mind as will charm their race into belief and obedience!

We have naught to say in disparagement of poetry; but while bowing reverently before its magic power, we can but lament that so many of its great masters have given themselves to an apotheosizing of the material rather than the spiritual; have yielded their worship to mute nature instead of revelation, and have laid their offerings on the altar of Apollo, when the Universal Father, the Almighty Maker, has been making vain demands for their homage.

Equally unsanctified have been the toil and end of philosophers and men of science, with some noble exceptions, and of our popular *litterateurs* too. We question not their ability, nor the eagerness of their quest for knowledge: we do not so

much as charge them with any positive assault on the religion of Jesus; yet, having made no consecration of themselves to God, in the sense of entireness, and not having begun and continued their researches, under a feeling of self-distrust, they stand as witnesses of the truth we desire to impress on you, that any effort of the mind to acquire truth, if attempted independently, will be found an enterprise of untold danger, and will prove a failure in the end.

We would have you deeply impressed with this truth, when you enter the house of God to hear lessons of salvation. We would have you entertain a distinct and forceful recollection of the perversion of your faculties, of the darkness of your mind, and of the consequent need there is for you to call on God the Father for the help of his Holy Spirit. It will not be found at war with that manly independence as to thought and opinion, which we have exhorted you to maintain. While the latter refers to your intellectual personality, the other concerns your mental relation to God, your utter dependence on him for truth, your proneness, when you reject his aid, to substitute falsehood for that truth; your consequent obligation to hold in distrust your own capacity for a correct apprehension of truth, as well as a just discrimination between it and error.

This sentiment will lead you to the possession of another, not less important—that of seeking to be guided, both in your hearing and in the manner of your receiving truth, by the Spirit of God.

“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.” The mind and heart should be in a prayerful state; that is, in a condition of *felt* dependence; and this will serve as an incentive to breathing out the soul in desire to Him who will give liberally.

To show you how needful all this is, we refer you once more to those who have gone before, and left us their glorious example. Before Daniel could trust himself with the messages of the angel, he passed through the preparation of prayer. When Cornelius was to commune with God, through an appointed minister, he resorted to prayer. Peter also fasted and prayed, in order to a full readiness for receiving the purpose of God toward the Gentiles, to be made known by him; and John was “in the Spirit”—beyond doubt the Spirit of prayer—before the New Jerusalem, with its august trains of prophecy, was permitted to pass before him. All these and many others betook themselves to solemn entreaty with Heaven, as essential to a right understanding of the marvellous things to be made known through them.

If, now, it was befitting in them to be thus prayerful, when angels, and even God himself, were to be the revealers, how much more does it not behoove you to implore Divine illumination, when the teacher to whom you are to listen is a man—a worm—like yourself, and when not only your own powers, but those also of your instructor, have been perverted from their high original! when teacher

and pupil both need the light that enlighteneth all men! In the absence of this sentiment, the pulpit, however evangelical and true to its high duty, will be little else than an intellectual almoner, distributing food for the mind, while the heart, because of its want of prayerfulness, will receive no strengthening aliment. Its light may play around your head, with a beauty that may enchant, and a glory that may dazzle; yet the well-springs of your moral nature will all the while be drying up, and the manifold channels along which peace and joy should be flowing in perennial gladness, be but as so many arid wastes.

Ah, my hearers, I would turn these urgent thoughts to a practical purpose! In desire for your profit, I would be personal, and ask, How many of you come to God's house with your hearts and minds profoundly imbued with sentiments like these? Who among you, while seated as auditors in this court of heaven, feel a kindling gratitude to the good God for having condescended to hold audience with you, that leaves no room for the intrusion of worldly thoughts?—a thankfulness that he should have spoken to you in your wanderings in such accents of mercy and words of condescending entreaty as compelled your return, and that he should still be revealing more and more of himself to you in his word and through his ordinances and sacraments? Ah! who of you, howsoever abundant in intellectual riches and accomplished by culture, deem it exaltation to come

down from your greatness among men, and, with the simplicity and teachableness of dutiful, and reverent, and believing children, drink in the lessons of love you hear from the pulpits of our Christian land; all the time, and from a sense of your incapacity, silently beseeching the Father to lead you by his Holy Spirit to a right understanding of these lessons? How many before me—for I would be plain with you—give a portion of each Sabbath morning to religious thought, to pious meditation, to a solemn preparation of the mind and heart for the interview you are that day to hold with the great Master of assemblies, thus seeking to have the chords of your soul attuned to a heavenly harmony?

Alas! that with so many to whom we propound these questions, there should be ground for condemnation, for guilt, and for improvement. I weep when alone, and I sorrow now as in kindness I reproach you, that your Sabbath mornings should be given so exclusively to toilet preparations: that you should think so much more about how your poor bodies, so soon to be dust, will appear in the eyes of vain mortals, than the appearance of your immortal souls in the esteem of Him who is so soon to enter into judgment with them: that you should lay contribution on the bazaars of fashion and on cosmetic-venders, that you may dazzle the multitude with an artificial beauty, and all the while thrust your soul into the presence of Heaven's royalty, hung about with tattered garments and

reeking with the foul odor of an innate and unrestrained corruption; that so many, who have high position, should make the mirror their shrine of devotion, and the poor, inflated forms, reflected therefrom, the idols of their worship.

O! if the gospel, as it is preached in our cities, and towns, and country-places, could but pour its accusing cries into the ears of hundreds and thousands who give it regular attendance, what startling remonstrances would they hear coming from it! what accusations of neglect, of mistreatment, and of wanton insult to its Author would it make! It would charge upon many, that while it came to tell the condemned of pardon, the bound of freedom, the toiling of rest, the parted of a time and place of reunion: that while it offered to pour into the lap of the understanding mysteries which even angels could not grasp, thus luring the mind into its vast fields of truth: that while it proposed to bridge the gulf dividing earth and heaven, so that the lost paradise might be regained, and entreated all mankind to return to an Eden lovelier far than the one lost by transgression: that while it had come upon this high mission, and from ten thousand pulpits had proclaimed from Sabbath to Sabbath its benevolent intent, multitudes had heard without gratitude: that these, its subjects, had given it no commanding place in their souls—had held no becoming festivals over its evangel—had sat under these evangels with minds filled with

worldliness, with hearts sordid and steeled against sensibility.

We complain that preaching has become effeminate in these last days: that it has lost its power: that truth is not sent, thunder-shod and burning, among the congregations of our times. There may be somewhat of truth in these fearful charges, and it is befitting that we who preach should lay no “flattering unction to our souls;” yet, until our people lay aside their sloth of mind, and rouse the intellect into something like a becoming activity: until the fashionable throngs that make the Sabbath-day and its solemn services the occasion of display lay aside their worldliness, giving less time to attractive personal adorning, and more to an attiring of the soul in the garments of meekness and devotion: until they learn the relative value of the gem and the casket, of the diamond and its encasing, acting continually and prayerfully on the acquired knowledge—until *this* is done, the pulpit, no matter how resonant with the thunder of Divine truth it may be, cannot recover its departed power. Its representatives are but men, and the chances are, that between it and the worldly hundreds that gather about it there will be an approximation, unless there be amendment; and for this reason we plead with you as hearers. We beseech you, if conscience has been making faithful application of what we have been trying to say faithfully, to do better in the time to come. Resolve now, that for

the future, you will come to God's house with souls prepared to meet your Maker: that you will possess yourselves with feelings of gratitude, self-distrust, and prayer, while you listen, breathing a continual desire to God that he would enable you to mark, learn, and inwardly digest the word made known to you.

2. *A second general direction we would offer is, that you hear with attention and with personal application.*

The hearer, for the time, is a pupil, in that whereof the preacher is the instructor; and placing himself in the house of God in this character, it should be with the resolution that, however complex the subject, or intricate the argument, or commonplace the style, he will give attention to the end.

Most distinctly does our Saviour, in the parable of the sower, point out the result of hearing without attention. He represents the seed as having been faithfully scattered, and as having found reception; yet the fowls of heaven passed by and picked it up before it had time to take root. Even so will it be with that man who attends preaching, and hears preaching too, but fails to fix his thoughts on what he so mechanically and vacantly hears.

What profit is preaching to that man whose attention is aroused only by some biting sarcasm, or by some sudden flash of genius, which, in truth, may be the least meritorious parts of the discourse? Such persons leave the temple with no knowledge

of the subject presented, and perhaps with not so much as a remembrance of the text!

If you would be an understanding hearer, you must sequester your mind from worldly *business*: you must put restraint on your fugitive thoughts—must learn to think; and then, beginning with the introduction, journey with the preacher through all the fields of argumentation wherein he may lead you, catching with eagerness his illustrations, examining reflectively his points; and in all this bearing within the soul an earnest desire that God would open your understanding so that you may behold wondrous things in his law.

Even this, though, valuable as it is, will lead to but partial good, unless you connect with it a habit of personal application.

It is in this sense that you are to make the gospel, whether read or expounded, a glass reflecting your moral image, assisting in giving beauty and symmetry to the deformities of that nature, and making such faithful revelations to your conscience as will contribute to your spiritual manhood.

The liberal hand wherewith many hearers transfer practical portions of the gospel to others, is reason enough, in the absence of all else, why they continue unfruitful, even under the most searching sermons. They never apply what they hear to themselves. There are always so many of their brethren and sisters to whom, in their judgment, the truth has exact application, that self is forgotten. They do not so much as trouble themselves

to find out whether or not the picture drawn has any colors or shades analogous to their hearts and lives. Their gaze is always outward—their look external. It is never introspective; and therefore do they practice a high fraud on their own nature, deceiving themselves, and attending year after year upon the ministry of the word without any improvement.

This habit must be yielded if you hope for good from that preaching on which you attend. You must make a personal application of all you hear, whether it refer to doctrine, experience, or practice. When the preacher brings before you the great doctrines of the gospel, such as the atonement, and its concomitants—repentance, pardon, renewal of nature, sanctification of soul, and body, and spirit—begin the application immediately. Ask yourself, Do I know these doctrines? Have I been thus penitent for my sins? Have these transgressions been thus pardoned? my nature thus renewed? and the work of sanctification thus extended throughout my soul, and spirit, and body?

Without this habit of application, no preaching can help you. The preacher might embody in his sermons the oratory of the world, he might speak to you as with lips touched with fire from the altar of God, yet would he fail to be a blessing to you. All would be lost on you.

We cannot too strongly insist on the evil of this inattention. It is a common fault in every congregation. Even good men indulge in it, and that,

too, without seeming to know the full measure of the wrong they are doing. We have seen the evil consequences of it so long that, coming to you with an irrepressible yearning to see you grow in spiritual excellence, we would give solemn warning of the hindrance it will furnish to our efforts. The results of our stated interviews will be met at the bar of God. My desire is, that I may so preach, and you so hear, as in that honest hour there will be no bitter recollections, no unavailing regrets. As I come to you, therefore, with reproofs, tempered, as I trust they will always be, with kindness, be not offended, but, by personal, impartial examination, see if they be not deserved; and if so, begin to amend. As I tell you of a gospel that can cleanse from all sin, that can save to the uttermost, give comfort in all sorrow, ask yourselves, Has it cleansed me? Am I saved to the full extent of its provisions? and, Do I daily share in its comforts? As I take from God's treasury exceeding great and precious promises and place them before you, let it be yours to make an application of them to your several conditions and demands. As I see you chasing with eager zeal phantoms which I but too well know will elude your grasp, and tell you of a form that will conduct you to the realization of a peace born in the skies, turn from the illusive chase and consecrate your enthusiasm to the pursuit of virtue. As the sad spectacle of others in consuming strife for riches that perish comes before me, and I point them to an "inheritance in-

corruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," be it your high purpose to let go your grasp on the perishable, and to fix it on the imperishable which is "reserved in heaven for them." As I look abroad among you, and see the young in their prime and the mature in their strength, charmed with the applause of the inconstant multitude, and sacrificing time and gifts, and, it may be, principle itself, in hope of standing at last on the summit of human ambition: as I look on you in your frenzy, and remind you of your peril, and then direct the eye of your aroused souls to crowns whose lustre will kindle and brighten when every star in the jewelled brow of night will have gone out, O! strive to be worthy, through the blood of the Crucified, to receive and wear them for ever! As I stand in your midst, and behold you tossed upon the broad ocean of life, the heavens dark with impending gloom, your leaking barks of time in danger of being stranded amid the coming storm, and tell you of a vessel that will founder not nor go down, when

"The breaking waves run high!"

a vessel which, when the last tempest that is to sunder soul and body shall come, will be found with every timber covered with sail, and moving gloriously on—a vessel which, when the judgment-storm itself shall be overpast, will be seen fast-anchored by the throne of God, and floating securely in the heavenly port—O! as I tell you of that

vessel, and of that port, embark the freightage of your immortality on the one, and toil day and night while life lasts for a final entrance upon the tranquil waters of the other.

3. *A third direction is, that you add to the foregoing a sure belief of every gospel truth, and a hearty trust in the Divine promises.*

It is plain, that faith is indispensable to profitable hearing. "The word preached," says the apostle, in his letter to the Hebrews, "did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Again, in his letter to the Church at Thessalonica, he says, "When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

From these scriptures, it is apparent that unbelief, whether it present itself in the garb of avowed skepticism, or as an obstacle to a willing obedience of the truth, is a formidable barrier to the free course of God's word, and should be guarded against.

By belief of gospel truth, as essential to profitable hearing, we mean a faith that has respect in its admissions, not only to the primal truth of the gospel—the atonement, but also to every clearly revealed doctrine, no matter how baffling to reason it may be. In connection with this subject, we have elsewhere shown that reason, in matters of religion, must determine what evidence is necessary in order to insure confidence in a system purporting

to be a revelation from God, and also of seeking to know the meaning of that revelation, so far as it may be comprehensible to a finite understanding. Whenever, therefore, a hearer is satisfied that the gospel is of God, and that certain doctrines are set forth in that gospel, they at once demand his confidence, whatever mysteries they may involve. It should be enough for him that an infinitely wise God has enunciated them, has given them a place among other recorded emanations from his mind. They should be received and reverently studied, and whatever of mist may hang about them, after reason has put forth its most potent energies to dissipate it, must not disturb his confidence. In this way, too, he is to hear: he should put away that disposition to challenge every truth that is veiled, so natural to the rebellious understanding, and receive meekly the engrafted word.

That disposition to challenge may do well enough when we sit down to hear the words of a man like ourselves. We may carry it with us as we follow a lecturer through his statement of some science, or principle in philosophy, of the claims of which to universal acceptance we may have grave doubts; but when God speaks, let us hear with reverential awe and adoring faith.

This simple believing spirit does not relieve you from the work of investigation; neither does it lead you to receive all you hear from the pulpit as certainly true, thereby freeing you from the task of personal examination and from the duty of sum-

moning all the faculties of your mind to the effort of comprehending what seems to be dark. It leaves the injunction of our Lord, "Search the Scriptures," in full force, and in application to you as a command, and carrying with it an obligation, to neglect which is to put in jeopardy your salvation.

He, therefore, who, under pretence of being a sincere believer in the truth, gives himself up to indolent dreams and stupid inaction, will never come to a strong, vigorous manhood in spiritual understanding. The gospel is a deep, rich mine, and if a man would possess its precious ore, he must be content to delve through toilsome days and wakeful nights, encouraged meanwhile with the reflection that he is gathering gems of celestial beauty that will shine for ever. It is a vast firmament bending over the soul, and radiant with the splendors of truth; and he who would behold the shining glory must uncloud the vision of his spirit, and with longings almost infinite gaze upon the revealed heaven. To him will the word become oracular. It will force its way out of the bonds of the printing-press, and with every page and word instinct with life, and warm from the broodings of the Divine Spirit, will breathe life into the soul of him who reads or hears. It will shed upon his soul a stream of glory, lovelier and grander than ever came from nature.

Wonderful, however, as are the unfoldings of gospel truth, when searched in prayerful desire, it is undeniable that that truth is wide beyond ad-

measurement, and that it has a depth beyond mortal sounding. He therefore who begins its study should remember that he essays a task beyond the capacity of reason: that he puts himself in communication with a system whose author is God—a volume, many of whose pages are burdened with a mystery that will never be lifted until the mortal shall have put on the immortal; and that his only consolation, when grappling with these, will be, that a time is coming when the shadows that now darken will be lifted, and the light of unclouded day fall eternally around him.

Our present condition is limited as to knowledge, and, humiliating as it may be to our intellectual pride, faith is often all that we can fall back upon for happiness. “Now,” says the apostle, “we see through a glass darkly.” The light of mere reason is so feeble, that even with the addition of revelation it leaves humanity groping in dusky shadows. We see only that which is near us, that is manifest to our senses: the more distant belongs to faith. Some one has said, that where mystery begins, religion ends. It cannot be so, for the shadow is upon us from the cradle to the final rest. The veil hangs upon the vision of the soul the first moment of its awakening to life, and not until it is launched upon the shoreless ocean of its immortality—that vast

——“Pacific main
Beyond this planet’s brink,”

will the veil drop, and faith be changed to sight.

Ah! how little do we know! how little of God! of his dread attributes! his awful nature! his ways, past finding out! "Clouds and darkness are round about him" and his purposes, and we cannot by searching understand. How limited is our knowledge of the universe! its mechanism and laws! its movements and interdependencies! Even this younger-born among the vast shining sisterhood is beyond our highest wisdom. Although it is our habitation, and within the range of our senses, we fail to read its hidden inscriptions. Its wild, untamable seas, its growing grass, its wandering winds and volcanic fires are hieroglyphs in nature as yet not fully deciphered. It is a magnificent cathedral, in whose worship are heard voiceful anthems and resounding choruses of praise, but whose mysterious architecture and unceasing liturgy are known only to Him who is Builder and High-priest.

There is mystery in the heavens above, on all the earth around, and, more than all, in our own being. Its doorway opened upon mystery, and when we pass into the silence of death, the living only know that we sleep. We sometimes stand in the evening time among the dead—*our own dead*. We recall the looks they wore and the words they spoke in life, and as memory revisits the whole of that past along which they walked side by side with us, and places before us the happiness we have lost, our bleeding love summons them back and pleads for some message—*for one word*, that will

give assurance! yet no voice is heard, no answer comes. We can only trust that they will “rise again at the last day.” O blessed be God for this!—that though we live amid shadows, and at last fold our hands and sleep, with shadows curtaining our beds, we can live believing, and die trusting, and sometimes shouting!—that while to our senses all may be dark, to our faith all can be bright as noon; that while the one has only the mortal to gather support from, the other is planted on the immortal; and that, with a foundation thus sure, neither the perplexities of life nor the awful mystery of death can disturb the soul that rests upon it.

This confidence in God, my brethren, should be yours when you attend upon his word. Let your faith receive every declaration he makes. Receive it implicitly, and concern yourself only as to faith in determining that what you read or hear has been clearly set forth in the Scriptures. We remind you once more that we are not persuading you to credulity in mere human teaching, nor to inaction as to doctrines. We would not have you follow the preacher in blind confidence of his orthodoxy. Consult the oracles of God yourselves, and see if what he teaches be according to the mind of God. We summon you to study—to prayerful investigation. Do not rest in indolence. To do this were to be less noble than matter itself. It calls on you to arouse your energies, and put them in exercise. Night and day; the heavens and the

earth; the morning dawn, and the sunset-glory, so like the

“Burning seal of God,
Upon the closing day,”—

all tell of motion—of unrest—of yearning.

“The passion-panting sea
Watches the unveiled beauty of the stars
Like a great hungry soul. The unquiet clouds
Break to dissolve,—then gather in a mass,
And float like mighty icebergs, through the blue.
We hear the wail of wild remorseful winds,
Sounding through forests in search of rest.
This grand old orb knows not repose: a maniac world,
Homeless and sobbing, through the deep she goes.”

And shall the soul, that Divine argosy, freighted as it is with immortality—shall its sails droop and flap in the dull air of indolence, while golden isles in the unreachèd heaven of truth hang divinely beautiful before it? Shall truths, like stars that glow and broaden on the night, hang before us, dim, yet glorious, and the aspirations of our souls not be tempted? No! no! let these aspirations ascend through the night of time: the dawn approaches, and beyond it there is a day in whose light we

“Will summer high in bliss upon the mount of God!”

Until then, we have God's promises whereon to rest, and these have never failed. In the far-back ages, men have tried and proven them. On these, Noah ventured upon the watery deep, and as the ark rocked upon the waves of an ocean-world, he

felt secure. Time would fail us in telling of an Abraham, a Daniel, and the long record of worthies whose voices float to us from buried centuries, assuring us that God's word is sure.

We will "walk by faith" then, while the night lasts. With some of you, the morning-vision is not afar off. Your life-day is almost done. The evening hour has come, and you will soon enter upon the rising day.

"Your parting sun
But peers above the range of crimson hills,
Taking his last look upon the things of time:
Dusk will be here anon."

And then, the morning! Until its glory break upon your ascending souls, *trust in God*.

Others of you to whom we minister have just entered upon the life of manhood and womanhood. For you we entertain the deepest and tenderest solicitude, and to you especially we pray God to make our ministrations a blessing. Life is before you as a "bright sunny slope," tinted with hope, and covered with flowers. It lies around you, so joyous, so calm, so hopeful, when looked at from your stand-point of inexperience and enthusiasm, as to resemble

"Some silent isle, on which the love-sick sea
Dies with faint kisses, and a murmured joy."

Looking at the glad faces of the young, as we often see them in their holiday-festivals and around the peaceful firesides of happy homes, the heart longs

to make their season perpetual. "O youth, so like a silver stream, breaking with laughter, from out the lake Divine, whence all things flow!"—O! bright and singing time, why gone so soon! But we may not stay the order of life. It is of God's appointment, and can be made fruitful of good. To you, as to all of us, will come seasons of sorrow, changes in life, reverses of fortune. Some will go forth in orphanage, others in poverty, and some to sickness of body, and, it may be, of mind.

Where, amid these darkenings of life, can we find comfort? Have this question, which will so deeply concern you when the bitterness of life presses hard upon you, answered now; for in the future, the chalice will be placed to your lips, and you cannot escape the draught. When disappointed in your hopes, broken in health, the dreams of youth vanished and gone,—thus stricken, where can the soul turn for rest? The experience of the past says, Turn to God! The dead, from their old graves, give this testimony. Could they stand in this presence now, with skeleton fingers they would point upward, and say, *Turn to God for rest!* Apart from him and his word, the soul is dark indeed. He is the only true light, and without him all is gloom. What would be the result, were the sun suddenly stricken from his fire-throne?

"The stars

Would wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless and pathless; and the icy earth
Swing blind and blackening, in the moonless air;"

the very winds would wither; the clouds would perish; and the universe itself turn to darkness. Darker and more desolate still were the soul, with no God, no Father, no heavenly home!

Take heed, therefore, how you hear of this God, of his promises, and the home he has fitted up for you. I come to tell you of him, and of these; to minister to you in doctrine and in spiritual consolation. The command, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," is upon me, and I am with you, in the order of Divine providence, to fulfil it. If fitted for any one duty within the range of ministerial work, it seems to me that that of lending words of sympathy to the sorrowing, and of encouragement to the sad-hearted, is the one for which my experience has best prepared me. I have known their need, and have felt how blessed it is to receive them. I would therefore take portions of your burdens, and bear them, as we journey together; and when we meet in this temple to commune with God, I would, while I unfold his mind as best I may, remind you of his all-strengthening grace, and speak comfortingly to you of the home to which we are tending, and of the friends we have there. Take heed to our messages! Hear them; and lash your fortunes for two worlds to that Jesus whom we preach! He is the only rock of security. O drop your anchor upon this firm-holding place of a perishing world! Fixed here, you have nothing to fear, amid the winds and waves of your voyage home; and when death shall have wrecked

every other bark, and the fires of the judgment consumed their fragments, *our old ship Zion* will still retain her mooring, her timbers unconsumed, her cordage unbroken—the immortal and indestructible creation of God! Then,

“Let this earth dissolve, and blend
In death the wicked and the just;
Let those ponderous orbs descend,
And grind us into dust.

“Rests secure the righteous man!
At his Redeemer's beck,
Sure to emerge, and rise again,
And mount above the wreck:
Lo! the heavenly spirit towers,
Like flame, o'er nature's funeral pyre,
Triumphs in immortal powers,
And claps his wings of fire!”

DISCOURSE IV

The Fall of Peter.

THE FALL OF PETER.

“Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.”—MATT. xxvi. 69.

“LET him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” This was the deliberate counsel of a man, the evidences of whose conversion were without a parallel in the whole record of Christian biography. It conveys to us, my brethren, a valuable lesson. It teaches that no present security arising from a clear conviction that the internal man has been renewed, and from a possession of the most undoubting assurance of that fact—an assurance produced by the direct witness of the Spirit of God—is a warrant for us to decline in our vigilance, or a license to us to slumber at our posts.

If ever we are made partakers of the blessedness of heaven, it will be, considered in relation to the

great procuring cause, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we admit; but regarded in connection with our duty as creatures endowed with a self-determining faculty, it will be at the price of unsleeping vigilance. No matter how fraught with ecstacy our feelings may be now, no matter how vigorous the exercise of our faith, nor how bright the ascending flame of our experience to-day, to-morrow may find a sad decline, in the absence of those means on which our growth in love depends. The possession of a strong purpose, a settled determination to do right, will not, in the absence of a corresponding practice, any more than the enjoyment of Christian graces, prove an ample fortification. This purpose may be ours now, and these graces may be flourishing now; yet, of themselves, they cannot shield the soul against the attacks of the wicked one, nor arm their possessor with the power of successful resistance. It is only by a constant distrust of ourselves, and a full reliance on the great Captain of salvation for help; by maintaining a jealous and prayerful watch over our hearts, and against the world and our sworn adversary, and by a uniform avoidance of evil in its very inception, that we can obtain victory over temptations from within and from without, and be finally triumphant over the world.

To fail in these incidents is to be defeated in the end. This defeat will not come, ordinarily, in the twinkling of an eye. The enemies that seek the despoilment of our hope will not find their work

undisputed. The love of the Father for his renewed offspring is vast, and will rouse him to the help, and, if possible, the ultimate salvation of his children; but, having made known his conditions, and the means through which he proffers abundant help, and having pledged his truth that the neglect of these will result in the forfeiture of his favor, he will be compelled by that truth to abandon those who abandon themselves. Our defeat, then, although not sudden, is certain, if we neglect the proposed means of success. This neglect will produce a gradual weakening of our faith and alienation of our affections, until at last even the Father will be compelled to forsake us; and left to ourselves, our destruction becomes as sure, in the absence of renewed purposes and endeavors, as it will prove awful.

A sad exemplification of this truth is given us in the history of Peter, in his estrangement from that cause in which he had embarked with such commendable bravery, and in his ultimate and blasphemous denial of Christ.

We have not selected this subject with the view of discussing a feature in theology on which good men entertain different opinions. This, we believe, would be as unprofitable to you as it would be disagreeable to your speaker. It were well for Christianity—for Protestant Christianity—if her battlefields were crowded with combatants impatient for strife with sin and Satan, as these manifest themselves in forms objectionable to all of us, rather

than with Ishmaelitish disputants on points of theology, the discussion of which, however important in some ages of the Church, is not demanded now; and which it were far better to enter upon, when discussion is called for, in a spirit less accordant with that of our enemy the Devil, and more in unison with the meekness of Jesus.

Our views as a Church on the subject of the final salvation of believers, or the Final Perseverance of the Saints, as the doctrine is called, are well known; and if necessary, we would not hesitate to offer a defence of them. We prefer, however, on this occasion, and from these words, to guard you against the perils by which all acknowledge themselves to be surrounded—perils, too, that lie along our life-path, from the dawn of being until its close, and which, if not watched, will prove our final and irretrievable overthrow. We would take occasion, at this hour, to warn you of these, by illustrations drawn from the apostasy of Peter.

We invite you to follow the apostle from the hour in which Jesus distinguished him among the whole college of apostles, by promising to commit to him the keys of the kingdom, to that recorded in the text. We ask you to contemplate this favorite of the Master, as, at one time, he avows a fidelity that would dare the gloom of a prison and brave the horrors of martyrdom, and then, at a subsequent period, renounces the allegiance he had so solemnly pledged, and renounces it, too, with blasphemy and cursing; and as you witness the

gradual enfeeblement of this apostolic Samson, the imperceptible yet certain decline of this brightest shining orb in the galaxy of early discipleship—as you behold it waning and still waning, until, shorn of its effulgence, its glory departs, and it is lost in the blackness of darkness, let the strongest among you take heed, and; by prayer and watching, prepare yourselves for endurance when the hour of trial comes.

The case of Peter stands out as a type of the progress of temptation, and the gradual ascendancy of evil over a nature really and truly pious in the beginning. It is marked by a regular and causative gradation of evil steps. True, there was but little time between the hour in which he so bravely avows his confidence and the hour of its renunciation; yet in that time events transpired which show that his course was not a sudden precipitation from steadfastness to disavowal, but that there were successive steps, leading from one evil to another, each reducing him to a condition in which there were accumulating forces bearing him on, and a diminishing power of resistance left in his possession.

We give full credit to the opinion that the grace of God may be claimed in precise proportion to the necessities of the creature—a doctrine taught by the words of Moses to Asher, “As thy day, so shall thy strength be,” and confirmed by the declarations of Christ and the apostles; yet we give equal credit, also, to the opinion, that for the creature to

fail in making application for the grace needed in the hour of temptation will be to abandon himself to the full force of the tempter's power, and render absolutely certain the triumph of evil. A man will, in such an instance, have renounced Divine aid—will have said, practically at least,

“Evil, be thou my good!”

and having yielded to the solicitations of sin, it is no marvel that he is then easily led on by the deceitfulness of its author and the promptings of his nature to its undisputed dominion.

Ah, my brethren, it is the first departure from right, the first attempt to silence the utterances of the soul, whose verdict on the moral quality of actions ought always to be heeded—it is this first yielding to wrong that is most to be deprecated!

We pray you, therefore, if you would close this hour's interview with the feeling that you have not heard in vain, to keep this fact continually before you as we follow the apostle through the several steps of his Christian decline.

The first prominent error committed by him seems to have been a misapplication of truth.

On a certain occasion, our Lord, in a conversation with his disciples, asked them, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye

that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In this conversation, Jesus conferred a high distinction on Peter as a recompense for the soundness of his views respecting Christ. He was but a man, however, and evidently placed a construction on the words of the Master which was foreign from the speaker. The plain meaning of Jesus was, that the reply of Peter, embodying as it did a fundamental doctrine in the Christian system, should constitute the rock on which the Church of Christ should be built; and that, in consideration of the soundness of this apostle's opinions on the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and his zeal in the cause of his Master, he would be honored by being the first to declare the gospel to the Gentiles. We see nothing in the record to induce the belief that Christ intended that Peter should make an exclusive application of the blessing to himself as an individual, but rather to the whole college of dis-

ciples then present, and represented by him as the principal speaker.

From the forwardness of this disciple on several occasions afterward, and particularly in the rebuke he intended to administer to Jesus himself, as recorded in the same chapter that narrates the interview, we are of opinion that he assumed an importance because of the words of his Master which they were far from justifying: that he made even the word of the Lord minister to his vanity and arrogance; and that in this process of misinterpretation began that catalogue of errors that resulted in the astounding circumstances and language met with in the text.

Our object to-day is to serve you; and to do this, we must not only point out in faithfulness the errors of the apostle, but make application as we proceed. Seeing, then, that the origin of his decline, as far as we can ascertain, was a misconstruction of the words of Jesus, let me urge on you the need of prayerfully studying the import of that volume in which is taught the way of life. Although you will not, after your utmost efforts, be able to comprehend all that God has declared in that volume: although you may not be able, as you approach the mount of salvation, like Moses, to draw aside the vail, and hold personal and infallible speech with your Maker, yet even then, like the awed Israelites at the base of Sinai, you may gaze in silent adoration, feeling the majesty of that

truth you may not grasp, and confessing the height of that wisdom you cannot understand.

There are, however, portions of the word of the Most High that enter immediately into your condition, and a full and accurate knowledge of which is important to your salvation. These you should study with diligence, and with a desire to know their import, and to inweave them with your daily life. We know it is said that it is a matter of little moment what a man's faith is, so his practice is right; yet this of itself is a glaring absurdity. Knowledge always produces action. If, then, our knowledge of truth be wrong, will not the life to which that false knowledge legitimately prompts be wrong also? We conclude, therefore, that misapprehensions or misapplications of the words of Jesus, as in the instance of Peter, will generate a corresponding practice, and therefore it is that we beseech you to study these words well, whether they refer to doctrine or duty. Let this be done upon your knees, and with constant and earnest supplication to God that he would grant you "understanding to know his testimonies." Do not take with you in this study a mind in vassalage to human creeds. Tear loose from all such fetters, and go to work free from bias, and in possession of an humble, teachable, and inquiring mind. One fault in this day is reading the Scriptures with our minds preoccupied with what our text-books and priests have written, and the interpretations they have given of the mind of Jesus. Absolve your-

selves from all these, if you would have God communicate with you ; and having received into your understandings the impressions of his word, and taken into your hearts the fructifying warmth of his Holy Spirit, seek to make your lives conformable, in all things, to what you have learned from these infallible sources.

2. *A second step to which we direct your attention in the conduct of Peter, is his unbelief and self-confidence.*

The word of God tells us that a Christian must walk by faith, if he would walk surely and acceptably. In the absence of sight, faith is our only reliance. It is then, as the apostle says, the “evidence of things not seen.” It becomes the food on which hope, weary with watching, and sick from deferred realization, subsists. Limited as we are, as to vision, in this life, faith becomes every thing to us, and in an uninterrupted exercise of it only can we please God.

In this essential principle the disciple proved delinquent. The Master had graciously apprised him of the attack that would be made on this bulwark of defence, and had even gone so far as to pray that it might prove strong in the hour of trial. He had said to Peter, “Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ;” but of all this he seemed sadly forgetful, and at a time too when remembrance would have saved him. We read that Jesus, just after he had celebrated the passover with his disciples, said to Peter, “This

night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice;" to which the self-confident disciple replied, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." In this reply, he shows a most palpable want of reliance on the warning previously and graciously given by his Master. He also exhibits a confidence in himself wholly unbecoming in a frail worm of the dust, and particularly at that time, when the prediction of Jesus was ringing in his ears. We believe that Peter was honest in his avowal; that he felt every word he spoke. If sincerity could have saved him, he was secure; for, whatever faults he had, he was no hypocrite. His words do not betray a meditated wrong. They were the spontaneous declarations of an enthusiastic soul, in proof only of a dangerous self-confidence, and an alarming distrust of Almighty wisdom. That wisdom had made known to him a solemn truth, and that too that he might fortify himself and prove victorious. Thus instructed, he should have been humbled at the announcement, and, by earnest cries to the Source of all help, have armed himself with Divine strength against the arrival of the predicted ordeal.

It was this want of confidence in God that led to sin in the garden. It had been said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof," alluding to the fruit of the interdicted tree, "thou shalt surely die." This prohibition was disregarded: the declaration of God was set aside, and the deceitful words of the tempter, "Thou shalt *not* surely die," acted on;

and in this way it was that the beauty of Eden was blighted, and our world filled with woe and lamentation.

There are reasons for apprehending that thousands in the Church are living in almost daily exemplification of the same unbelief that resulted in the loss of paradise, and that made Peter a cowardly apostate. They read the threatenings of the Almighty as recorded in his word; are familiar with those warnings against what, by way of distinction, have been called little sins; yet, under the persuasion that, having in their hearts a desire never to dishonor the cause of religion, therefore they cannot be in such imminent danger, they habitually neglect plain and evident duties of Christian life, and live in the indulgence of improprieties of conversation and conduct, which the word of God does not tolerate, and to which that word has appended alarming and certain penalties.

Brethren, hear the truth, and, instead of taking offence, bless God that he opens the mouth of the preacher, and fills it with honest, truthful words. We do not charge you with wilful disloyalty, nor with determined and habitual disobedience of the gospel; yet we come not far from the truth when we tell you that your lives are such as to indicate either a woefully defective knowledge of duty or an appalling want of confidence in the plain declarations of God's word. You seem either not to know that many things you do, and which you catalogue as unimportant deficiencies in Christian character,

have been interdicted in that word, and that too under penalties the most severe, or you persist in an unbelief that must, if continued, keep you out of heaven. O be not unbelieving in what you call minor things! They are small with men, but to God's eye sin is never small. The leakage in that vessel that floats at the quay may be small. An insignificant worm may have eaten it, through the strong heart of the oak; yet if it remain, it will cause that gallant ship to go down to the bottom of the sea. So with these minor faults—these daily omissions of duty. They are eating away the basis of Christian character—are springing leaks in the vessel of your immortality; and if you are not careful to repair the evil already done, and to put away the cause, so that further mischief be avoided, your bark will founder in some of those hurricanes that meet us on our voyage. The fault of Peter was to him an imperceptible offence. He was beguiled into the persuasion, perhaps, that it was a Christian virtue; that his avowed courage was becoming at a time when danger was menacing his Master; and in this way he may have lost sight of the fact that in proportion as he advanced in self-confidence he retrograded in faith. Learn from his failure to give full credit to the threatenings as well as the promises of God; and although it may lead you to the sacrifice of interests and passions that may be dear as life itself—sacrifices that our Saviour spoke of under the figure of “right eyes,” and “right arms”—in God's name, make them, for

it is better that these members perish than that your "whole body should be cast into hell-fire."

3. *A third step with the apostle was his want of watchfulness and prayer.*

At the close of the solemn feast of the passover, which our Lord and his disciples celebrated just before his betrayal by Judas, they all sang a parting hymn, and after that went out to a place called Gethsemane. On arriving there, the Master said to the disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto ~~them~~ them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at

hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

We have given you the whole of this inimitable record, because we could not mar the beauty of its style by any substitution of our own, and because it cannot fail in moving you to something like sorrow at the suffering yet self-forgetful Jesus. Ah! with what meekness does he appear to us as we contemplate him in that midnight struggle in the garden! It seems astounding, as we look back on that scene, that his chosen friends—his sacred body-guard, as we might call them—could have been so wanting in those fine and tender sensibilities that call forth sympathy for suffering even among enemies, as to have slept, while the groans of their tortured Master filled the lonely garden, and even drew a strengthening angel down from heaven! And yet Peter was asleep. That bold enthusiast, who, but a short time before, was ready to die for his Master, has now reached a point in his rapid retrograde, when, with the words of reproach—“What! could ye not watch with me one hour?” and those other words of kindling agony, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”—to stimulate his languishing zeal, he can give himself up to a dishonoring indifference, and lie down to sleep with as little concern as though that Master were banqueting on the food of gods instead of draining the cup of a world’s sin. I confess to amazement, as I look in upon that strange and eventful night-watch, and see the bowed form of

the lonely wrestler, and hear those touching litanies that go up from his convulsed lips to the Father in heaven, and then see his disciples, and, above all, Peter, asleep. In those solemn shades, Jesus is beginning to drink the bitter cup of redeeming agony ; and it would seem that on such an occasion, when the death of his truest friend, the stilling of the most loving heart, and the suspension of the grandest nature in the whole universe, is being heralded by the coming of more than midnight gloom upon the soul of the sufferer, that with Peter, at least, every pulse of the heart would have been roused to a quickening response ; that he, too, in the measure of his capability, would have been moved to such a wrestling with the Father that would have startled the winds by its outpoured vehemence ; and that with the recollection that He who thrice prostrated himself on the cold ground, and said, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” was, in that exceeding sorrow, but snatching from him and from the world a curse merited by all—was but bridging with his own suffering humanity the gulf that sin had opened between earth and heaven ;—O ! it would seem, we say, that with these memories and this high knowledge which he had learned from Christ, and with his lips yet wet with the sacramental symbols, the bold, courageous, lion-hearted Peter, would have been found assaulting the very mercy-seat with the strong arm of prayer ; that for once he would have striven to have held God and the purposes of ages

in abeyance by the might of supplication. But no! While Jesus prayed, and suffered so that the crimson gore stood upon his flesh, this chosen disciple, this plighted follower, who had avowed a willingness to go with him to prison and to death, and for whom that Jesus was then suffering—this covenanted friend, at such an hour, was fast locked in the arms of sleep!

Ah! you ask, in the deep indignation of your souls, Why such ingratitude? Why such cruel neglect? Why penetrate the soul of Jesus with this barb of unfeeling torture? Why break, by treachery like this, the heart already burdened with the weight of a world's iniquity? Go find an answer to these questions in that disciple's want of prayer, and learn a lesson never to be forgotten. It is the key of explanation; and with it, we do not marvel that he slept. He had restrained prayer, and his strength was gone. In his sleep, he had suffered the enemy to bind him. He had reposed amid the din of battle. His soul was unstrung. There was no might in its resolves, no ardor in its energies. There was no majestic swell in his emotions, his sensibilities, his sympathies. There was no grand uprising above the region of the storm and the path of the whirlwind. He had not prayed, and was therefore passive, tame, and powerless!

Brethren, are we to learn no lesson from this? O, in the name of my Master, I would say, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation!" By the discomfiture of Peter: by the wretched condition

of thousands of poor miserable apostates who once occupied the position you this day hold in the Church of God: by your own decline in religion since the hour you promised to “renounce the Devil and his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, and all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you would not follow or be led by them”—by these, and by all else that is linked with your great immortality, I would reëcho the solemn warning, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation!” Your enemies are within and around you. The world will tempt by its plans for wealth, and its schemes for pleasure, and its visions of ambition. The Devil will assault, sometimes as an angel of light, and then as a roaring lion: the flesh will appeal with all the force of appetite and the clamor of passion; while the multitude of the ungodly will at one time seek to intimidate you in the path of duty, and then strive to seduce you into that of evil. Ah! we have need to watch; for we are

“Surrounded by a host of foes,
Stormed by a host of foes within :”
“Angels our march oppose,
Who still in strength excel,
Our secret, sworn, eternal-foes,
Countless, invisible :
From thrones of glory driven,
By flaming vengeance hurled,
They throng the air, and darken heaven,
And rule this lower world.”

Without vigilance, there is no chance of heaven.

The way lies across a dangerous sea. However tranquil the waters to your gaze, there is deceit lurking in the beautiful expanse. The storm is only bound : the element of destruction but sleeps, and will awake perhaps when the deluded voyagers, weary with worldly pleasure, will then give themselves to deceitful dreams. Look around, ye who are strong in your security, and who live without watchfulness, and behold the wrecks of vessels that once sailed on joyously and thoughtlessly as ye are now sailing, and without fear of danger—O ! look at these, as they stagger on your streets, or profane the atmosphere with their apostate curses, and be admonished ! They once had a place like you among the people of God : like you, they trifled with duty, presumed on Heaven's kindness in venturing on forbidden ground, and now, judging from their beastly habits and their profane words, they walk hard by the precincts of hell, and only wait the change called death to enter fully into their father's habitation. Watch, then, until you are enthroned with those who were once children of the wave and the storm, even as all are, but who, having entered the heavenly port, are now enjoying the deep tranquillity of their home !

But the injunction to Peter included prayer also : "Watch and pray." Need this be urged on the good man ? Prayer is his daily food. By it his soul subsists, and when restrained, it is as though his life were going out. He loves to pray. With

him, prayer is the child holding tender speech with the Father. It is the earthly communing with the heavenly—the immortal climbing toward infinity. It is the voice of the exile floating homeward in words of anxious inquiry, bringing back messages of love, answering lays from the fatherland. The cynic may sneer, the philosophical may laugh, and the proud turn away with contempt curled upon the lip, yet we will pray on, rejoicing that there is One who knows our feeble flesh, and to whom we can open our hearts, and plead a promise in every grief. Be it yours, my brethren, in sunshine and in shade, in the day when fortune smiles, and in the night when sorrow comes, to lift the soul to God in prayer, until by faith you catch that view of “brighter things in heaven” of which we sometimes sing. If you have trials as a part of your heritage here, this is your comfort, that you can commune with God and lay hold of his sustaining hand. Prayer makes a feeble man almost omnipotent; for, in praying, he becomes God’s medium. We know of nothing that endows with power equal to this. We can conceive of no spectacle of greater moral power in the world than an humble Christian on his knees, his eye fixed on the cross, his hand of faith on the warm, palpitating heart of the Crucified, and his soul believing, determined, and trusting. Such a man is endowed with an energy that is superhuman. Men may combine for his destruction, and devils may exhaust their cunning

and their hate for his ruin, yet God encamps round about him, and he is safe.

“His Captain leads him on,
And beckons from the skies :
He reaches out a starry crown,
And bids him take the prize.”

Firm as the mountain-rock he stands, trusting not in himself but God, and exclaiming, “I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.” Darkness may veil his skies, and thunders break over his head, but, by the clear light of faith, he beholds written on his standard-sheet the words, “I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid !” And, gathering courage, he binds his sandals on afresh, and, armed with the sword of truth, goes on, conquering and to conquer.

O brethren, this is the way to victory ! It is by prayer :

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air,
His watchword at the gate of death :
He enters heaven by prayer.”

4. *A fourth step in Peter’s decline was his indecision.*

When Jesus was taken into the house of the high-priest, we read that “Peter followed afar off.” His Master was now in the hands of his enemies, and he seems undetermined whether to hold on to or renounce his allegiance. It was a moment of awful hesitation. Conflicting emotions crowded

his mind. Love urged him on, while fear bade him linger. It was a great crisis in his faith. The whole man seemed to tremble under the fearful equipoise, until at last the beam begins to droop under the weight of fear inspired by powerful enemies. He is seen following "afar off."

Decision of character is always important. In religion, it is indispensable. The man who embarks in the service of God should define his cause under the clear light of truth, and, once defined, he should follow without divergence. Whenever Christian duty becomes plain, action should be prompt. There should be no hesitation, no reckoning as to policy, when Christian principle is involved. We should, in such instances, *do*, and not stand parleying with weakness, or convenience, or, what is still more common in this compromising world, public opinion. He who goes right on, giving ready obedience to conscience, will have need of courage—a courage, too, not such as sometimes prompts men to seek

"The bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth,"

but that higher courage that would dare to do right in the face of a world's opposition. What grandeur is equal to that of a man who, upborne by inward rectitude, would immolate himself on the altar of duty rather than violate conscience? Such a man, encompassed by opposition, is as a ponderous rock towering above a raging sea. The war of the

floods, as they lash the structure of his character, is unheeded by him; while the discontent and malice of the turbulent multitude that howl in his track change not his course. The great question with him is *duty—what is my duty?* When that question is answered, neither the timid apprehension of friends, nor the bitter hate of enemies, has power to bend the sublime resolve of his consecrated soul. Sooner would the zephyr bow the Alps than would these divert him from the right!

Brethren, make this rare virtue yours! To be without it, is to be the plaything of influence, the dupe of every passing opinion. Many, like Peter, have lost it. They are undetermined as to their acceptance with God, sometimes hoping, but oftener fearing. These can but hesitate. They have done so little for God, and so much for self, as to have lost all religious confidence in themselves; and believing that others have still less in them, they are found loitering by the wayside, following “afar off.” They know not whether to live on as they now are, hoping at last, by some unauthorized stretch of mercy, to be saved, or to come out honestly, and make a total renunciation of their religious profession. The groans of the damned, falling on their ear, and bidding them come not to their place of torment, tell them not to give up; while the barrenness of their souls discourages them. The shouts of the redeemed, among whom are some from their own firesides, appeal to them from heaven, and, for a time, they are determined on

amendment; but the allurements of the world, and the seductions of sin, soon leave their resolutions a broken wreck. They tax their minds in an effort to invent some excuse for their neglect of duty, some palliation for their sins. They set themselves against the usages of their Church, or some peculiarity of the preacher, and it is not long before every thing in others wears to their wrong-doing souls the seeming of wrong. Responsibilities are shunned, crosses are avoided, self-denial is given up, and they follow "afar off."

Are these before me now? Do I speak to some thus hesitating? some who were once devoted to the cause of God? some who, like Peter, were willing to go with him to prison, and even to death; but whose goodness proved as the morning cloud and as the early dew, and who are now hesitating between a return to the old way and an avowed apostasy? Let me conjure you to choose the former: to make one more vigorous effort—one in keeping with your high nature, and worthy the immortal soul you possess! Put forth this effort, and it may lead you to freedom, and finally to heaven.

5. *A fifth step in Peter's fall was seen in the associations he formed.*

We refer again to Jesus in the house of the high-priest, as the evangelist has recorded it. We learn that soon after he was taken there, and while the scribes and elders were assembling, the servants of the household, and no doubt many of the rabble, gathered around a fire in the hall. Peter, who had

not yet entirely deserted his Lord, and who had kept in sight as the officers were conducting Jesus to the scene of trial—following “afar off”—now entered the hall, and, instead of retaining a place near the person of Christ, took a seat around the fire. He was among the enemies of Jesus, and, from all that we can see, preferred being regarded as one of them.

He had passed the line of separation, and was seated among persecutors. As yet he had been silent, as far as we know. The work of infidelity was going on noiselessly in his bosom; and although no word of betrayal had been spoken, he had taken his place among the ungodly, and was fast verging into complete apostasy.

On this rock, my brethren, thousands have been shipwrecked. Those most in peril are persons who, like Peter, are by nature of a warm and fervid disposition. They are persons generally unsuspecting, and easily led astray. Their private friendships and intimate companionships contribute essentially to the shaping of their religious life, and if these are made up of the wicked and thoughtless, as is not unfrequently the case, they are soon found wandering in forbidden ways. They are led on one step at a time, as was Peter, with hardly so much as a knowledge that they are going, until they reach a point where their conduct gives no testimony either to their piety or Church-membership. Outside of their Church associations, they are not recognized as belonging, even by profession,

to the people of God, there being nothing in their demeanor on which such a recognition could be based.

They remove, it may be, to another community, obtain Church certificates in good faith, and with the intention of presenting them as soon as they are settled; but after weeks and months of postponement, during which they mingle in the gayeties and dissipation of the world, they find themselves without any relish for the duties of Church-membership, and so conclude not to renew the association. From this neutral position, the transition to vices of a more frightful mien is easy, and in a little while we find them living in open, and some of them in boasted identity with the wicked and unbelieving.

There are, as I have reason to believe, representations of this transition state among the regular attendants at this temple—men and women whose position is anomalous. They are neither pious nor avowedly wicked; but they are in bad company, as was Peter. Their most intimate, and we may say their only intimate, associations are among the wicked. These sit far back in the house of God. We never see them bow the knee when solemn prayer is offered in behalf of the congregation. They profess to be religious, yet give no practical, satisfying proof that they are. They have not lost sight of Jesus, but are making themselves comfortable with his enemies. Peter seated among the opposing rabble, as they gathered about the fire in

the palace of the high-priest, is their type; and while seated there, he was verging into another stage in his decline, which he soon reached. It was,

6. *Equivocation.*

While occupying his anomalous position among the enemies of Jesus, a little damsel passed by, and in the course of the conversation charged him with having been with Jesus: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." His reply was: "I know not what thou sayest."

Now, this was not a total rejection of Christ, but merely an equivocation—"I know not what thou sayest"—and clearly involved the idea of rejection. It shows how gradually the apostle went forward in the work of evil. Unwilling, in the very face of his Master, and amid the loud clamors of his abused conscience, to deny the truth thus startlingly cast upon him, he evades by feigning ignorance and unconcern: "I know not what thou sayest."

We turn from him once more to the Church, and find thousands who are now occupying his position. They do not openly deride Christianity—they have nothing to say against it; but when others assail it, they are silent. They seem to say, when the foes of religion are ringing those old threadbare changes about too much zeal, and sentiment, and noise, in connection with the revival movements of the times, that they are quite of the same opinion; and if some curious damsel, with an un-

fortunately good memory, should chance to recur to some former period in their lives when they, too, were not ashamed to be seen mingling among the revival throng, and should say, "Thou also wast with them," they coolly reply, "I know not what thou sayest." They thus become suddenly ignorant—utterly and astoundingly ignorant.

Beloved brethren, this is the tendency of our own Church. I must speak out, and you must hear. We have gained much, I know; but it cannot be denied that we are losers in some things—things, too, in which it were better we never had gone forward at all, as a people, than to advance without. We have surrendered much of our heroism, and have come down to equivocation, or to what is but a step from it. We have become ashamed of that zeal, that divine fire, that made luminous the path our fathers trod, and that flamed and glowed around them as they passed from us to their places at God's right hand. The gospel has done too much for our world: its power has been felt in too many homes where there was little beside to give comfort: we ourselves, and thousands like us, have had our souls kindled too many times into exulting ecstasy, for us to be ashamed of it now. Too many stupendous minds have been smitten with the glory of its doctrines, and made to rejoice, to shout, under the pentecostal communications of its spirit, for us to pander to a semi-infidel generation of philosophical sciolists. No, never let us be guilty of rising in our pride and speaking lightly of the

cradle of piety in which we were rocked! Better that you cast words of mocking and scorn on the mother that sacrificed the gayeties of her young womanhood in devotion to your infant wants, than take part with those who sneer at the zeal of Methodism. When these meet us in the high places of life and intellect, and by insinuation say, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," let us not, like the craven Peter, say, "I know not what thou sayest;" but, in a spirit of loyalty and gratitude, reply, "Yes! with him, in the song and prayer! with him, around the altar-place where souls were converted and made happy! with him, amid the cry of the penitent and the shouts of his people! with him, amid the pentecostal thunders of the revival! and hope to be with him for ever, where many millions pour forth a volume of praise louder than the roar of ocean or the voice of storm! Let us know the power of this gospel! Let us talk of it, and preach it to a suffering world, and not, by cowardly equivocation, seem to take part with such as seek to refine away its power, and rob the heart of its rich heritage!

7 *A seventh step which Peter took was that of open falsehood—direct denial of Christ—attended, too, with open profanity.*

The evangelist, in continuing this history, says, that "after awhile came unto him they that stood by, and said unto Peter, Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man."

The enemies of Jesus were satisfied that he had equivocated, and determined to press him to a decision. They evidently saw that his courage was fast going out, and anticipated the result. When they pressed the charge home, and appealed to his dialect in confirmation, he came out boldly, and denied all knowledge of Jesus with cursing and swearing.

He stands there now conquered by Satan. Satan had "desired to have him, that he might sift him," and the desire is now gratified. He has triumphed, his purpose is accomplished, and his dishonored victim stands there, in sight of Jesus, an unblushing liar and a foul swearer.

In this melancholy fall, you will see, my brethren, that the descent from strength to weakness had been gradual. From self-confidence and want of faith, he had been led to neglect prayer and watchfulness; then, to a state of indecision; then, to equivocation; from equivocation he passed to denial; from denial to a lie, from a lie to an oath, and from an oath to an imprecation, or curse.

We may well exclaim, as we contemplate him, "How are the mighty fallen!" This is the man who but yesterday said to that Jesus, whose eyes are now fixed so mournfully upon him, and of whom he has now said with an oath, "I know not the man!" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" who was then willing to go with him "to prison and to death;" and whose declaration was, "Though all men should forsake thee, yet will

not I." Ah! what a fearful eclipse has come upon this great Christian light! and with what trembling should we, who think ourselves safe, regard him!

Every circumstance seems to aggravate his guilt. He was a favorite disciple of our Lord; had been admitted to marked distinctions; had stood with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, and gazed upon the hidden divinity as it beamed forth in overwhelming brightness; had been endowed with miraculous power; had received obedience from devils: there he stands, denying that Master, whose hands had washed his feet, whose words had instructed him in the mysteries of grace, and whose life had been one of tenderness and love.

But a few hours before, he had been seated around the table of the Last Supper, where Jesus had served him, and where, in the solemnity of the hour and occasion, he had pledged a friendship unto death, if need be. With this scene freshly enamelled on his memory, and in full sight of the crucifixion, he stands, denouncing the Lord from heaven, with bitter imprecations and curses.

O! unparalleled infatuation, that one who had been as a mountain of iron, should thus quail in the hour of trial! that one who had been so honored should stand there in unblushing infamy, shorn of his strength, fallen from his purity, the ridicule of enemies, the victim of cowardice, and the object of scorn with the profane rabble, among whom he was trying to be most profane.

Imagine, my brethren, that scene before us—that hall in which the Son of God is arraigned for trial, his persecutors gathered around a fire: there stands the once stern-visaged and lion-hearted Peter, now trembling and restless. A damsel charges on him that he, too, was with Jesus. What an occasion that question gives for him to show his fidelity! But no, he evades. Another of the rabble throng comes forward, and renews the charge: “Surely thou, also, art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.” He now loses all shame; he begins to curse and swear in his mad recklessness, saying, “I know not the man.”

Let us approach and interrogate him. It may be that some olden memory will heave its treasure from the sea of the past, and that, startled from his dream by its coming, he will take back his cruel words. “Peter, know you not that man standing there, with the pale and haggard brow, at Pilate’s bar, and whose life, though unpretending, was one of goodness and love?” His reply is: “I know not what thou sayest.” “Peter, do you not remember that, when your wife’s mother was at Capernaum, scorched with fever, she arose in health, at the touch of that man’s hand?” His answer is: “I know not what thou sayest.” “Peter, you cannot have forgotten the time when, as you were asleep in the ship, a tempest swept over the bosom of the sea, lashing the wild waters with fury; that, in your alarm, you awoke that Jesus there, saying,

‘Lord, save, or we perish!’ that in simple majesty he arose, and rebuked the winds; and that you marvelled, saying, ‘What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’” His daring response is: “I know not what thou sayest.”

“Peter, listen while we recall another scene, which you cannot have forgotten. Go back to the night when that Jesus stood on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, preaching to the people, his voice, like some new-born harmony, falling sweetly on the ears of the listening multitude, while the air around was still as starlight. Remember you not how that lovely night-scene was interrupted by the arrival of Jairus the ruler; how with bleeding heart he fell down at the feet of Jesus, saying, ‘My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee come and lay thy hand upon her, that she may be healed?’ Do you not remember the words of that man, then, as news was brought to the stricken ruler that his daughter was dead, ‘Be not afraid, only believe;’ that he took you, Peter, and James and John, and departed for the room where,

‘Like a form
Of matchless sculpture, in her sleep she lay,—
The linen vesture folded on her breast,
And over it her white transparent hands,
The blood still rosy in their tapering nails;’

that, approaching the beautiful sleeper, he took her hand in his, and looking her in the face, said, ‘Maiden, arise?’ Ah, Peter, have you forgotten

how that at the sound of that voice—the voice of him that stands there before the high-priest—a flush

‘Shot o’er her forehead, and along her lips,
And that through her cheeks the rallied color ran,
While the still outline of her graceful form
Stirred in the linen vesture;’

and fixing her eyes full on his face, she arose? Is not that scene among the unlost memories of the past?” Hear him, as without a blush he replies: “I know not what thou sayest.” “Peter, we cannot yield you up. We will ply these questions still, in the hope that some lost memory will come, and bring you back. Do you not remember the leper that came with his dry and bloodless hands, and his covered lip, his scales of livid purple, his loathsome, leprous hair, to this Jesus and his disciples, among whom you were then numbered, and falling down, besought him, saying, ‘Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;’ that Jesus, bending tenderly over the poor outcast, said, with that voice whose harmony was like the master-tones of some rich instrument, ‘I will: be thou clean.’ That at that word the scales fell from him, while the dewy softness of childhood stole over his brow, and that, cleansed from his leprosy, he fell down at your Master’s feet, and worshipped him?” In petulance and rage, he disavows all recollection of it. “Peter, go with us to the hour when you saw that man there walking upon the waters; when, under the excitement of your fervid soul, you

attempted to approach him, but was alarmed at the winds and waves, and, beginning to sink, cried for help. Have you forgotten his look of mild reproof, and his tone of love, as he said to you, ‘O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?’” His indignant, scornful answer is: “I know not what thou sayest.” “But, Peter, thy ignorance must be feigned. Thou certainly art one of those who were with that prisoner there. Thou art a Galilean, for thy speech says so; thy dialect condemns thee. Confess to at least a part of the truth.” At this his anger transcends all bounds, for “then began he to curse and to swear, saying, ‘I know not the man.’”

O misguided infatuation! O wretched and cruel apostasy! We turn again, and ask, “Can nothing call from you acknowledged remembrances of that life, in which *yon* pale man was your best and truest friend? Are all its generous incidents, and of which *you* were always an eye-witness, and many times a sharer, given to oblivion? Will nothing break your determined ignorance?” His one reply is: “I know not the man.”

Once glorious light! midnight is on thee now! thy courage, which once would have sustained thee amid martyr-fires, is gone, and thou art now as a tossed feather in this storm.

Ah, how changed must have been his feelings! Once a consciousness of right upheld him, then his soul was peopled with glad emotions, and ennobled by high resolves. These are gone, and with them

strength and happiness have departed too. Conscience now lashes, the temple is deserted of its high-priest of self-respect, and, a miserable apostate, he struggles to find relief by an augmentation of his sin; for "then began he to curse and to swear."

Brethren, we have followed the apostle, from the hour of his brightest shining to that of his darkest eclipse; and we would close our task by inquiring, if the labor of this hour is to be lost, or shall we behold it in the judgment meeting? Who will take warning from what has been said, and go home to catechise his soul? We ask at your hands the work of self-examination. The hour of judgment is approaching, the balance-sheet of doomsday will soon be struck. Are ye ready for the final settlement? Let this question be answered before you dismiss it from your thoughts. Take the instruction of this hour to your closets, and there compare your lives with the life of the apostle. Find out at what point in his downward journey you have arrived, and, in the strength of Divine grace, begin your return. O begin now! for time will soon be gone. Remember there is forgiveness for the past, and grace promised for the time to come. Delay not to make application, for the time is short.

We would close as we began: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Peril surrounds us all; let us be faithful, and soon the

warfare will be past, and we shall go up in victory.

Then shall we sing,

“Now, at last, our course is done,
Ended is the glorious strife ;
The battle’s fought, the victory’s won,
Death is swallowed up of life!”

DISCOURSE V

The Restoration of Peter.

(183)

THE RESTORATION OF PETER.

“And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly.”—LUKE xxii. 60-62.

WE have presented you the sad spectacle of a disciple, on whom Jesus had conferred the highest distinction, proving faithless to his Lord and Master; faithless, too, under circumstances the most aggravating. We trust that the message was not lost upon you; that not one has failed to enter into an examination of himself, and that you have assembled now with renewed resolutions to follow God more faithfully in the time to come than you have in the time past. There may be some, though, who, after solemn and impartial self-inquisition, have concluded that their sins have been so enormous, and have been committed so publicly, as to leave but little hope of recovery, and that, dreadful as the alternative is, they will shake off the last hold of God's gracious Spirit, and abandon them-

selves to the open service of the devil. If this class be here, suffer the word of expostulation. If the adversary of your souls has blinded your eyes heretofore, so that you saw not, and has led you to the brink of ruin, do not now, with the voice of love and the tones of mercy ringing in your ears, tamely submit to be hurled from that brink into utter hopelessness.

We do not wish to hide from you the enormity and guilt of your past folly. We will admit that your life has been one of ingratitude, and that rebellion against what was designed for your happiness has marked it. We concede, as to others, who yet have a place in the Church—who have the form but not the power of godliness—that your Christian profession has been one of but little enjoyment to yourselves, and less advantage to the cause of God; and that your indifference and worldliness have given pain to the pious, and been subjects of frequent animadversion by those who glory over wounds of this kind in the body of Christianity. We will not withhold the truth, however it may afflict you, that your conduct and profession have been sadly at variance, and that a reformation now would draw on you for a time the sneers of the ungodly with whom you have been intimate, and whispered suspicions, insinuated doubts as to your sincerity, from imprudent brethren; yet what of all this? What are these, and difficulties a thousand times greater, when balanced against your eternal salvation? Will your happiness in this life be

augmented by persisting in your present course of indecision, sharing neither the comforts of religion nor the confidence of men, when it is within your power to come boldly out upon the Lord's side, and live so as to honor his name? On the other hand, will it add to your happiness or increase your respectability among men, for you, who have been recognized as the followers of Jesus, to make an entire renunciation of your Master and his cause, and move henceforth among men as an acknowledged apostate? O bethink you of your interest, while thought can lead to saving action, and bestir yourselves while there are even the faintest signs of life in your souls!

Come, now, and let us talk in kindness and as friends! We will suppose that you hold membership in the Church, or that you have your Church-certificate; that when you left your former home you obtained it, with no other expectation than that of uniting with God's people as soon as you were settled in your new home; that since you came to this place you have mixed yourself up with fashionable folly, indulged in forbidden amusements, run the giddy round of gayety, until you have lost the spirit of Jesus, and are hesitating as to the propriety of renewing your Church relations.

My message to you is, "Come back!" Go not another step in that downward way, for it will lead you to destruction. Thousands, we know, are thronging it; but it will not make its final issues less intolerable for you to know that your company

is that of a great multitude. If you have a sense of your decline in the service of God, no matter how far you have gone, begin your recovery with energy. Begin it now, even while I speak to you; for to-morrow may be too late. Far as you may have wandered, your distance cannot be greater than Peter's, nor your guilt more aggravated; and if, through the amazing mercy of God, he returned and found the blessing of pardon for his enormous offences, and lived so as to prove his fealty afterward, may not you? Be not intimidated by circumstances, however formidable. The more formidable these are, the more need there is for you to act promptly and with resolution.

We know that many apostates come to this temple. Some have gone entirely away; others have denied him; while many are following "afar off." That you come at all to this his house gives us hope of your recovery; and we desire to consecrate this hour to an attempt to lead you back. We propose, therefore, to make the repentance and restoration of Peter the basis of our appeal to you, and may God pour upon us all the healthful influence of his Holy Spirit, and make this the hour of salvation to many that hear!

The account given of the repentance of the disciple is short, yet full enough. It begins at the point where he is described as cursing and swearing. In the midst of this, he was arrested by painful conviction for his sin, and went out to weep over his folly. "And while he yet spake, the cock

crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

In making this incident the basis of what we would say to you, my friends, there are two features in it which I desire to make prominent.

I. THE NATURE OF HIS REPENTANCE; and,

II. THE INSTRUMENTALITIES BY WHICH IT WAS PRODUCED.

What we shall say on the subject of repentance will have reference more particularly to some of the features observable in the case we are considering. It is legitimate to conclude that with the doctrine of repentance you are all familiar; and that however you may have excluded it from your practice, you are most of you well informed of its meaning, and could make statement of it, as laid down in books and preached from pulpits, that would do credit to your orthodoxy.

It is with the repentance of Peter, the several phases that give it individuality, and the lessons to be enforced from these, that we would engage your attention.

1. *And first, we observe that it was sudden.*

Repentance, as to the phenomena of it, generally bears a likeness to the sin that calls for it. If the offence has been marked by successive steps, rapid, crowding each other, and hurrying the victim on to a crisis, without giving time for accompanying reflection, it is to be expected that the return of such a victim will be equally impulsive and immediate.

Especially is this true of a man of an impetuous nature and ardent disposition, as was Peter.

His fall, although regular in its gradation, was precipitate. He gave himself little or no time for deliberation, but, hurried on by the tide of evil, which met with no resistance, he was soon completely prostrate. A strange infatuation seemed to have possessed him during his delinquency: as if fascinated with evil, he surrendered himself so entirely and suddenly to its influence as to court its strongest fetters.

When the signal mentioned by Jesus was heard by him, conscience seemed to have flashed lightning-like over his soul, and the baseness of his conduct stood before him in all its magnitude. It was as if he had been startled from a terrible dream, or delivered from a hideous nightmare; and so appalling was the remembrance of his faithlessness, his falsehood, and his profanity, and so shudderingly did his better nature recoil from the ingratitude and meanness of which he was guilty, that he was overwhelmed with remorse, and hastened to pour out his soul in penitential tears.

His repentance was therefore immediate: "Then went he out and wept bitterly." "Then," that is, instantaneously, while yet the evidence and remembrance of his infidelity were ringing in his ear; while the thunder of conviction was pealing through his aroused and alarmed conscience; while the gleam of sorrowful reproach yet stole from the

loving eye of Jesus: "*then*"—before he allowed himself to listen to the suggestions of worldly policy, or the voice of unbelief: "*then*"—that moment, and without pausing to consider the mockings of the rabble and the loud clamor of the murderous mob: "*Then* went he out and wept bitterly."

2. *A second feature in his repentance, worthy of notice, is his withdrawal from the enemies of Jesus.*

"He went out and wept bitterly." From the time of his entrance into the hall of the palace to the crowing of the cock, we find him seated with the rabble, associated with the enemies of his Master, and evidently desiring to pass for one of them.

As soon as he was awakened to a knowledge of his sin, he tried to place a line between him and the persecuting throng with whom he had sought fellowship. He withdrew from their company; seemed anxious to dissolve the ties by which he had sought to bind himself to them; to separate himself, and that at once, for "*then* went he out, and wept bitterly." His heart was overcharged, and he desired to be alone, that he might pour out his soul in unhindered contrition. He knew that the blasphemous crowd among whom he had sought to be most blasphemous, would give no help in that hour of need; that they would heap reproaches on him; that he stood in need of retirement, in order to that solemn inquest of his soul he desired to behold; that having been recognized by Jesus as sitting among them, sincerity now required that he

leave them; that he give proof of his abjurement of the past by renouncing those who sought his Lord's life; and, therefore, "he went out," and, in solitude, "wept bitterly."

Ah, my brethren, he had need of silence and solitude. His sin had been great, his infatuation astounding. It must have amazed him, to remember the distance between his position then and his high place when Jesus had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." It was that he might solemnly measure that mighty stretch, and ponder each step of his journey, that he sought to be alone. We marvel not that he withdrew himself from the rude crowd, and that in the darkness of the night, and alone, he should attempt to compass the enormity of his guilt, that he might estimate the gratitude due the love that pardoned it.

3. *Another feature in his repentance was its sincerity.*

It was accompanied by the bitterest anguish. There was no merit in the tears he so freely shed, nor in the sorrow they betokened; yet they were important in this connection, as indicating a condition of mind prepared to receive the pardon.

There can be no true repentance without sorrow: it is a part of repentance. In the language of an

apostle, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." This sorrow may not always find expression in tears, but the iron must enter the soul before the soul will fly to the Crucified for relief. With Peter, the agony brought weeping with it. His heart—that once brave heart—dismayed at its cowardice, and tortured by the memory of his transgressions, sunk under the awful feeling of brokenness, and found relief in tears. Ah, there was sincerity in that gushing fountain, and there was comfort too. It is only when the heart dries up, and can send out nothing but the breath of agony, that the soul suffers pangs that are hopeless.

"Sorrow that streams not o'er,
Spares but the eye to wound the heart the more;
Dumb, infelt pangs too well supply the woe
That grief, in suffering silence, shuns to show."

Peter "went out and wept bitterly;" and it was through these tears that he saw a pardoning God.

And now we come to make an application of all this to you; and we pray God to dispossess you of every defence against the truth, and to incline you to receive it in meekness, and with the desire that it may work your salvation. We would urge on you the importance of addressing yourselves immediately to the work of repentance, as did Peter. We know that Satan will do his utmost to prevent this. He will fill your minds with all manner of evil suggestions, with unbelief, with opposition to the means we may counsel you to adopt; and, if you pause to heed his influence, he will bestir

himself, and but too successfully, to introduce you into a more ruinous thralldom. Do not give heed to these suggestions. It is enough that you know your sinfulness; that, if unpardoned, your sins will damn you; that if the pardon be refused now, it may not be offered again, and that if sought now, it can be found.

Why hesitate, when so much depends on action? Why continue in bondage to sin, when experience attests its ruinous tendency? Which of all its promises has it ever fulfilled? Who has been known to rejoice in a dying-hour that he had lived its subject? O begin now to shake from you the charms of this singing syren, and see to it that you live no longer in delusion. I would plant myself before you in your downward course, not as your enemy but as your friend. I would speak to you as your brother, reminding you of the love you have slighted, the mercy you have despised, and the goodness you have abused. I would remind you of the joy you once shared, and the peace that then filled your soul, and by these conjure your return to Him whom you have forsaken. Do not spurn me, as I stand in your path to entreat, but hear me; and as these earnest pleadings are attended, as they will be, by the still more urgent appeals of the Divine Spirit, resolve that now shall be the day of your salvation. And should this purpose be formed, imitate the disciple in his separation of himself from the ungodly. These have led you to the verge of ruin already, and unless all

association with them is dissolved, your attempted return will prove a miserable failure. There is nothing that will sooner banish seriousness from the awakened soul than intimacies with the wicked. Renounce them at once, and in the quiet of self-communion, or in counsel with such as have passed through the work of repentance, and who can sympathize with and direct you, seek the favor of Him whom you have deserted.

Turn not from the cup because of its bitterness. You may expect it to be as wormwood and gall. You have sinned, and sin will cost the soul sorrow. He who has its stain upon his soul must either mourn in this world, or lament in the world to come. He must shed tears of repentance in time, or of despair through the unending future; of contrition in sight of Calvary, or of hopelessness when God will have abandoned him for ever. Be only thankful that you can sorrow now; that your sins, though like scarlet, may become white as wool, by the blood of the Crucified. Be willing to part from them. Why should the soul love sin, when its evil and ruin are remembered? Contemplate these, and then turn from it! Sin has separated you from God; has effaced his image from your moral nature; has quenched his light in your soul; has put darkness on the visions of truth that once charmed your mind; has armed conscience as your accuser, and kindled a hell of remorse in your bosom. It has sent the voice of wailing through the world; has put the seal of death on the millions

that sleep in burial-grounds, and in the sepulchre of the sea; has mantled the earth in gloom—dug hell itself, and kindled its quenchless fires.

This is the vile thing we would have you renounce. Who can hesitate to do it, and that now? The next appeal that Heaven makes may find you far beyond its entreating voice; for

“Soon, borne on time’s most rapid wing,
Shall death command you to the grave:
Before God’s bar your spirits bring,
And none be found to hear or save.”

Turn, then, while you may; and as these signals of the Divine compassion are sent to you from the gospel, let contrition lead you in prayer and faith to the all-merciful Father.

II. IN THE SECOND PLACE, WE WILL CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED PETER TO REPENTANCE.

It is an interesting task to study the operations of grace in the recovery of the wandering. The instruments employed are often such as the wisdom of man would overlook, and, by their very insignificance, give demonstration that the excellency of the power is of God. Of themselves they are nothing; but when attended by the power of Him who uses them as means, they become mighty to salvation. Let us contemplate those employed in the restoration of Peter.

1. *The first presented in the detail given by the Evangelist, was the crowing of the cock.*

“Immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew;

and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly."

This instrumentality was evidently designed as a remembrancer. Our Lord had told Peter that, before this signal should have been given, he would have denied him thrice. This was said in connection with the gracious warning given by the Master, the neglect of which had done much toward hastening the final catastrophe; and now that that foretold event had occurred, and the signal of it was given, it served to startle the poor disciple from his forgetfulness, and to awaken him thoroughly to a sense of his wickedness. True, it was but an ordinary event, and was heard by others with neither alarm nor interest; yet to Peter it sent a message fraught with the voice of doom; and although it excited no attention among the gathering multitude of revilers, it was enough to send a thrill of agitation through the great deep of his faithless soul. It had meaning for him, though not for them; and no doubt to him the simple crowing of that cock had as much of the supernatural in it as the rending rocks, the mantled heavens, and the parting veil had for those who afterward stood around the cross, and who, at these miraculous displays, exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

In all this, we only see the wisdom of God in employing an agent which man would have overlooked, but which, under God, was made mighty in leading the trembling apostate to a consideration of his folly, and to an abandonment of it.

We dare affirm the probability that this insignificant agent had more of potency in its employment here than would have been felt had Jesus surrounded Peter with the whole of those twelve legions of angels whereof he had made mention as being subject to his command, and by that marshalled army of the skies rebuked his infidelity.

And may we not regard this as setting forth the simplicity of the means ordinarily employed in awakening men? The truth, we know, is the great instrument of salvation. We desire you never to lose sight of this; and we know that it should lead you to place a high estimate on that truth, and to do it profound reverence; yet we are speaking of auxiliaries to this gospel in the work of salvation. We refer now to these providential means laid under contribution by the Almighty, which, although unimportant and even unsuccessful of themselves, become, when attended by the Divine Spirit, tributary to our salvation.

They are the immediate causes of awakening the dead in trespasses and sins from their slumber. They are the special envoys of Providence—the ministries he sends to the individual, and, by their blended insignificance and power, attest their origin and design. We do often, in looking for the causes of repentance, and in seeking to find means for leading men to God, overlook these, because of their littleness or their seeming unfitness. The Father though, in their use, teaches us not to despise the day of small things, and, turning away

from such agencies as in our pride we might select, takes hold on those things that are esteemed as naught, and by their efficient employment proves the work his own, and proves, furthermore, that in carrying out this work of salvation he intends to make things great and small subserve the purpose of his will.

Ah! if men would but disengage their thoughts from the affairs of this world more frequently, and put themselves in the position of willing and waiting auditors to an ever-speaking God, they would hear voices continually rising from the most neglected nooks along the wayside of their pilgrimage! Stones and brooks would indeed become their preachers, sending sermons often that would touch the heart as no human oratory can. We have only to look around, with eyes open and heart attent to Providence, to be taught the highest lessons; for there are tongues in all things that God has made, and we have only to give heed in order to be wise. The industry of the ant, the decay of the mountain-oak, the perishing of a favorite plant, the whisper of a passing breeze, the murmur of a rill, or the falling of a moonbeam on our pillow in the hush of night, may often convey to the child of dust instruction more eloquent, and conviction more moving, than the most finished discourses, or the most eloquent appeals from the pulpit.

He who has builded for us this vast temple, and written upon its solemn mountains, and giant hills, and tranquil sky, so many magnificent inscriptions,

and poured from the lips of her cool mornings and still noons and crimsoned sunsets so many impressive lessons, has, in this way, surrounded us with beautiful and touching evangels. These speak to all, and are ever speaking, if men would but still the soul into befitting audience. Voices these are, which, like the tones of love, are never turbulent, and may not be heard amid the roar of gain or the Babel-speech of fashion and folly; but to him who will turn aside from the busy enterprises of time, and, with his soul reaching outward and upward, will let silent thought possess him for a season—to him will these ministries speak with a wisdom and gentleness that will win from his worshipping nature the holiest love for Him whose goodness they proclaim.

We envy not the man who can hear unmoved the voice of the Almighty coming to him from circling planets and floating clouds above, and in tones akin to human from the fair young flowers at his feet: who can turn his eye upon the provinces of God's creation, scattered as they are through the range of dread infinitude: who can witness the stars in their courses, and the seasons in their order: who can catch the warmth of the sun, as it comes streaming down from its far-off central throne of fire, and feel the soft touch of invisible winds, as they float along their highways of travel: who can see all this, and feel all this, and not be inclined to love Him whose hand formed for us so glorious a habitation, and arched it with such glit-

tering splendor, and made it one of a boundless confederation of worlds, all designed to show forth his wisdom, power, and love!

I speak this day to a people in love with nature, from her star-galaxies overhead to her beautiful flowers that adorn their homes. To you, I make the appeal, Does not each pictured symbol of your abused Creator, revealed by nature, tell you of your ingratitude, and plead with you to come back to God by repentance? Does not each leaf which he has so delicately pencilled, and every flower whose fragrance he lends to the air you breathe, demand for their Maker your love?

I address some to-day who have heard his voice and been afraid. In the accents of the storm and thunder he has spoken, and, like Peter, you recognized the warning signal. You have been out on the deep sea when the demon of the tempest has been walking the deep, leaving desolation in his track; and as you gazed with trembling and awe, your thoughts have gone forth to the time when a mightier hurricane would pass over the land and the sea, and a voice within, yet louder than the speech of thunder, whispered the warning of readiness to your terrified soul.

I address others who have stood in the fresh and fragrant morning, as it called the sleeping city back to life and business; and as you heard the tread of the market-throng, the voice of renewed life, swelling from awakened households and from the mart of business, telling that the grave of night had

given back to day and business the tenantry of your city, it has been to you a type of a world casting away the garments of death and coming forth to the engagements of eternity, and with it came the warning, "Be ye ready for that dawn of doom!"

O! tell me not that because the lips of nature open not in noiseful clamor, that therefore she is dumb! No: she hath a voice, and its articulations come to every reverent soul. Her sun, with "his whole round of rays, full-orbed, complete," lighting up hill, and valley, and mountain, and warming whatsoever it shines upon into life and fruitfulness, is the symbol of God. Her spangled firmament, stretching from horizon to horizon, and trembling all over with starry pulses of glory, whensoever night lets fall her curtain of shadow, is a symbol of that word whose great and precious promises gleam out upon the troubled soul through all the night of time. The ocean, that great, sublime immensity, with its alternations of calm and fury, is an image of eternity; and so with all else in nature. From the gloom of her unpeopled solitudes and from her fertile fields: from atoms floating in the light of her noons, and from midnight worlds: from her green hillsides and her beautiful gardens, come accusations of your guilt in having forsaken their Maker and Builder. These all publish your guilt and summon you to repentance. They should speak to you as the crowing of the cock did to Peter, reminding you of the depth of your infamy,

and appealing to you to go out, and by contrition find your way back to the bosom of a pardoning God.

Another signal by which you are often summoned to repentance is providence, and under this you have all wept and promised amendment. Your possessions have been wasted, in despite of economy and foresight: your frames have become enfeebled, amid all your precautions to keep away sickness: the skeleton-horse with his pale rider has passed through your homes, and your children have folded their hands in final slumber under the fond watchings of your love: these, separate or combined, have served as so many signals from God to remind you of your danger and duty.

Ah! what scores do I meet in these Sabbath interviews who, when sickness held before them the pale garlands of the tomb, felt the bankruptcy of their souls, and vowed to seek a cancelment of Heaven's claims, by repentance, if life should be spared! In that hour of utter helplessness, like Peter, you heard the signal-call, and you promised God a service which to this hour remains unperformed.

There are others that occupy these seats, and many of you I know, and have witnessed what I shall charge against you, who, as you stood around the dying, and with your hands clasped in the hands of those whom now you see no more, and your hearts heaving under the agony of the parting-hour, solemnly promised to so live as to

renew the clasp then being given for the last time here on the banks of the river of life. These pledges you renewed when in your unchecked sorrow you were wont to go, in the early morning or the still evening, to the grave of the lost one, and recall the words they spoke and the looks they wore in life, and treasure up the smile which your promise planted on their pale cheeks as they were dipping their feet in the cold waters of the last stream; yet these pledges, these solemn vows, breathed amid the parting strife, and while the Divine signal was filling all the chambers of your souls with its echoing call, you have lost sight of in your absorbing chase after the fleeting phantoms of an hour. Would God that the appeals of this hour might startle them from that sleep of years in which you have suffered them to fall, and that in their awakened strength they would speak with a voice that would send you home to weep and pray, until, like Peter, you could look heavenward and say, "O my bleeding, loving Lord, thou knowest I love thee!"

2. *A second instrumentality used in restoring Peter was memory.*

He remembered the word of the Lord, "and went out and wept bitterly."

The first instrumentality seemed to sustain to the second the relation of cause, for it was only when he heard the predicted signal that memory was awakened. Up to that time, he gave evidence, first, of timidity in his regard for Jesus, and then,

of a reckless and shameful disregard of him. He seemed to have utterly forgotten the time when Jesus said, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." He was oblivious of a thousand things, the memory of the least of which, it would seem, had been sufficient to prop his swaying heroism; and, urged on by some demon force, seemed determined to court his fate. But when the signal came from without, he paused in his headlong course, and then memory began its work of agony. He "remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly."

He *remembered!* Ah, my brethren, it is not when sinning that a man suffers most; not then is it that he sorrows unto genuine repentance! but it is the memory of sin that bars the iron, and then drives it through the writhing soul. While he is sinning, he acts as though under a spell, an exciting delusion; but when the sin is committed, and conscience becomes tongued—when memory comes, making the sin stand out-pictured as a foul abuse, not only of the amazing goodness and love of God, but of the sinner's nature; lifting from the loathsome sepulchre into which they have been cast the innocence and happiness of the soul, and hanging remorse over that soul like a garment of fire—O, it is then that life becomes a mockery—a hell!

"In that instant, o'er the soul
Winters of memory seem to roll,
And gather, in their drop of time,
A life of pain—an age of crime."

And that soul becomes the battle-ground of strife between good and evil. Its great powers, armed and divided, are engaged in an elemental war with which there is no parallel torture this side the world of the damned; and thus involved, it feels

“Unfit for earth—
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!”

“Peter remembered!” and the “dead past” lived again. It stood before him in the clear light of memory and conscience. The life of Jesus, with whom he had been intimately associated, came back. He remembered the meekness of his Master; his kindness to the poor and outcast; the proofs that he had given that he was God; the hour when, at his touch, the fever fled from his wife’s mother; when the dead maiden was restored to life; when the leper was healed; when *he* was kept from sinking; when the sisters of Bethany embraced their risen brother: these were all fresh in his mind; and above all, “the word of the Lord,” foretelling the sin of that hour, and warning him of its approach, was before him. All were remembered then; and as these memories pierced into his soul, the cloud of sorrow floating there broke, and withdrawing himself, a shower of tears, bitter at first, yet sweet, consoling tears in the end, was followed by the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness.

And now, can we not persuade you who have

listened to this effort in your behalf, to let into your minds the light of other days, and by awakened remembrances be stimulated to that repentance that leads to joy? Are there no spots of sunshine, no wreaths unfaded, which memory has preserved amid all your wide waste of good? Devoid of happiness as may be the present, cannot the abused past give back at the call of memory some early blessedness,—

——“When life was young,
And love and hope kept joyous holiday?”

O! is there not, far behind these stormful clouds that now hang heavily in your unlighted sky, the remembered brightness of some star that then lent its guiding light? Wrecked as are your hopes, can you not say,

——“Yet lovely joys
Still in the depths of memory lie;
Like night-gems in the silent blue
Of summer’s deep and brilliant sky?”

Throw open the portals that shut out the bygone, and, as you remember the days of your childhood, the home of your youth, its altar of prayer, the bowed form and trembling tones of your praying father; as you wander once more, a prattling child, among the trees that sheltered you then, listening to voices which now, alas! are never heard; as you pass on to the hour when you gave your young heart to God—the happiness that succeeded—to

the evil time in which you took the first step in that path that has led you far away from him—the remorse that followed—your promised amendment, and, soon, your broken vows, your despair, and then your final fall—O! as these memories, like voices, float around you, some of them sweet as songs of home to the exile, and others solemn as

——“The cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind,
Borne on the wings of the dark night, to the
Wrecked mariner——”

turn, turn to Him from whom you have departed, and who only can restore to you your lost happiness!

3. *A third and crowning instrumentality used in the restoration of the disciple was the look of Christ.*

“And the Lord turned and looked on Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly.”

He “*looked on Peter.*” Some of you know the magic influence of a look—its power to convey a meaning too big for the lips to speak. You may have felt it in the yearning gaze of a mother, whose sorrow at your ingratitude, and whose pain at your unkindness, the lip, quivering from agony, could not utter, but whose tearful eyes and anguished face told what the burdened, breaking heart felt so keenly.

And so Jesus looked on Peter. His lips were dumb; his voice was silent; yet he *looked on Peter!*

Ah! there was meaning in that look—a meaning thrown there by the soul, trembling under its burden-pangs, and which no speech could tell.

It was a look of sorrowful appeal. He was then entering on that fearful expiation in which the disciple was personally interested. That disciple had voluntarily given him his friendship; had shown on several occasions a marvellous heroism; had proven himself worthy of confidence; had been the loudest to proclaim his readiness to go with him to suffering and to death; and now that the hour has come in which his suffering human soul has need of every sympathy, that bold brave heart, that was once ready to pour out its blood in his defence, has abandoned him to enemies, and unites with them in adding indignity to his sufferings.

Ah! my friends, there is a pang connected with the betrayal of confidence, a sorrow on seeing perfidy where we expected fidelity, that lays the soul low in the dust, where in silence it bears the pangs of unrequited trust. Against the influence of malice and the force of hate, one may strive, but under betrayal, never! It is then that the soul becomes powerless—lies crushed.

How touching the reply of that Roman who, when struck by the hand of friendship, exclaimed, “And thou too, Brutus?” Others he could resist, but at sight of that hand he gathered his mantle about him, and gave himself up to death.

The look of Jesus seemed to say, “And you too, Peter?—you whom I have loved and trusted, and

for whom I am so soon to die?—*you* among these who clamor for my blood?"

It was a look of pity too. Although there was sorrow in it, it was full of sympathy. As though he had said, "I warned you of all, Peter, and you should have been prepared; yet I knew your weakness; I am acquainted with the strong influences that have assailed you: I, too, have been tempted, and but for the strengthening given by the Divine, this poor wavering humanity might also have been overcome. My sympathy is still yours, and I fain would love you—would save you. Turn from your evil, Peter: come back, and receive my forgiveness. O! believe me! trust me! love me still!"

"And the Lord turned and looked on Peter!" It was a simple act—a mere motion—a single glance of the eye: these were all; but ah! how irresistible! That look went to the soul. It entered the holiest place of feeling, and lay like a warm sunbeam on the disciple's dead affections. He felt that he was forgiven. Love was rekindled, heroism restored, and now he could go with Jesus to prison and to death. It transformed the trembling reed into a moral Apennine, moveless, storm-defying; and from that moment he never waned again. In all his subsequent history, no matter what dangers menaced, he proved himself the same bold, inflexible defender of the Christian faith. Persecutions never intimidated him. In the gloom of dungeons, he proved his fidelity, and amid the fierce pangs of martyrdom itself, his great and con-

secrated soul remained unconquered and unconquerable. It was enough for him that Jesus loved him: loved *him* after all the insult and shame he had heaped on him. This feeling of gratitude bore him by Calvary, the vacant sepulchre, on to Jerusalem, to the summit of Olivet, and surrounded him with the wonders of Pentecost. Thus strengthened, he passed through the perils and hardships of an eventful ministry; preaching by day in synagogues, in streets, and by the wayside; and sometimes in dungeons at night, singing praises to God. In every time, and place, and condition, he was prepared to say, "Thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee!"

And now, will you, who are without God, suffer this example to be lost on you, or will you take courage and press your way to the mercy-seat while repentance can be succeeded by pardon?

"While God invites, how blest the day!
How sweet the gospel's charming sound!
Come, sinners, haste! O, haste away,
While yet a pardoning God is found!"

By the fear and hope that alternate in your bosom: by the means employed for your salvation: by the awful truth that your punishment, if you reject, will be measured by the stupendousness of these means: by your exalted nature and noble powers—powers which, if not consecrated to good, will at last become the instruments of your agony: by the very character of God and the inexhaustibleness of his love: by the infinite blessedness of heaven,

and the unrevealed agony of the damned: by all that can excite your hopes or rouse your apprehensions, we pray, in Christ's stead, your reconciliation with God!

O! if there be a people under heaven whom gratitude should lead to God, we are that people! We have no excuse, no cloak for our sins. With the most liberal government in the world, the free circulation of the Scriptures, an unrestrained exercise of conscience, a gospel preached by every grade of intellect, and in all our country, we are under the highest obligation to prove ourselves emulous of every virtue and Christian attainment, and yet how wide the dominion of iniquity in our country! And if we come down in this application to you who dwell in this city, [Mobile, Ala.,] the obligation only increases, and failure to meet it but gives enormity to your crime. God has opened his hand in blessing to you as a community. He has given you a soft, delicious climate: has caused flowers to grow and fruits to abound; and yet how many here, amid all that should charm you to the service of God, are despising the riches of his goodness, and living as though life here were to be eternal, and immortality a dream! And when you would not remember God, he has shaken the wing of the pestilence on your homes, and left the dead thick in your dwellings. The sound of wailing has gone out upon the putrid air, because the strong in their strength, and the young in their beauty, lay pallid in your habitations of mourning.

Ah yes, from each pulpit and altar: from houses of prayer and haunts of piety: from wan lips and dying-beds: from graves of love, and the sleeping places of friendship, God has been calling you to repentance, and yet your language is, "A little longer!" Friends have besought, and parental love has implored your return, but still your answer is, "A little longer and I will!" Religion has come to you with her beautiful hopes, and, with lifted finger pointing to the home where parts of your household have gone, has urged you to be ready for the final meeting; and while tears have told on the longings of the soul, worldliness has answered, "A little longer—still a little longer!"

"*A little longer!*" Ah! this is the spectre-wail that haunts the lost—the undying moan of the fire-tormented and damned! It comes to them as the dirge of their fled probation, the thundered knell of a hope that is dead; and yet it is the lullaby by which you are hushing the cries of your entreating conscience.

How long—how long—O, *how* long would you have God stand and wait? Have you no fear that even *his* patience is exhausted, and that from this hour patient mercy may turn to unpitying vengeance?

"What if a sternly righteous Judge
Has sealed this call your last?
Before you, sickness, death, a tomb;
Behind, the unpardoned past.

“Your Sabbath suns may all have set,
Your Sabbath scenes be o’er :
The place at last where we are met
May know your steps no more :

“The prophet of the cross may ne’er
Again preach peace to thee :
The voice of interceding prayer
A farewell voice may be.”

“God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” You are sowing to sin and procrastination, and without repentance must reap destruction.

Begin, then, this moment to retrace your steps, lest the next invitation find you beyond its reach. Jesus looks on you now in sorrow, yet in pity. In all your wanderings, he has loved you, and would now save. His blessed word is, “Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.” Approach him to-day—*now*; and as you bow your soul before him, let its inmost cry be,

“Turn and look upon me, Lord,
And break my heart of stone.”

DISCOURSE VI.

Christian Steadfastness

CHRISTIAN STEADFASTNESS.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable.”—
1 COR. xv. 58.

THE gospel, my brethren, as a system claiming to be Divine, has passed through the most trying scrutiny. Its friends have never stood opposed to a fair and candid examination of its claims on the confidence of mankind. On the contrary, they have invited it, knowing that from every ordeal of the kind it would come forth honored by the trial.

It has been its fortune, though, to have to contend with captious objectors, whose opposition originated not only in the pride of intellect, but in the deep-settled hatred of the heart. The efforts of combatants of this class to destroy the foundations of our hope have savored of wanton wickedness, and have been carried on in a spirit of uncompromising hostility. They begin their investigations of truth unfairly. They sit down to the task with a resolution either to conquer the truth, or, should they fail in this, to reject whatever the

system may embody that lies beyond the province of human comprehension. They seem forgetful, at least careless, of that great truth, under the force of which men ought always to read the Bible, which is, that being his word, professing to reveal his mind, it is but reasonable that it should be suggestive of great ideas beyond human mastery. This they do not consider; and assuming that the finite is dishonored if it fail to comprehend Paul with the same ease that it can understand Bacon or Locke, they set aside such statements of facts in the Scriptures as cannot be grasped by their minds. This class of unbelievers will find themselves baffled in their efforts to know the mind of God, and, in the absence of deliverance from their intellectual pride, must soon be entangled in the meshes of undisguised infidelity.

This is a kind of mental insubordination to which even believers are exposed, and which not only brings disquiet, but serves as a formidable hindrance to spiritual growth and enjoyment. Its subjects are men who are accustomed to profound thought, and whose moral nature has not received culture equal to that given to the intellectual: men, in short, whose religious experience is superficial, and who are exposed to imminent danger at points assailable through the mind. They meet with doctrines clearly revealed, they admit, in the Scriptures, but which are utterly incomprehensible—doctrines on which the speculations of learning have been divided for centuries, and around which

the same mysteries lie as of old. Impelled by a desire to find some solution, they avail themselves of the helps of past times, and begin the study of those high mysteries; yet their labors result in nothing more satisfying than speculation. The mystery remains. The seals affixed by Infinite Wisdom are unbroken. The summit of the far-sweeping mountain, at whose base they strained the vision of their questioning spirits, remains lost in the clouds. Disappointed in their efforts, they become impatient. They are soon plunged in an ocean of disquiet; and, unwilling to wait trustingly until it suits the Divine will to dissolve the seals and uncloud the mountain summit, they become vacillating in faith, indifferent on matters of definite revelation, and not unfrequently are found renouncing the entire Christian system, and arraying themselves among its most bitter revilers. Wandering stars are they, ever changing their position in the heaven of truth, yet never finding a fixed orbit for their travel!

Somewhat of this folly was exemplified by the Church at Corinth. The enemies of Christianity had inquired: "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" Now these questions had respect to a doctrine that Jesus had taught on several occasions, and which the apostles had repeated with emphasis, appealing to the resurrection of their Lord in demonstration of its truth. It was a mystery, however, and although enunciated as a great fact, they were not able to explain

it. For its truth, they had God's word, and the reputed resurrection of Jesus; yet when asked to give some solution of this article of their faith, that would satisfy the philosophic spirit in which the demand was made, and not being sufficient for this, their confidence began to waver. In this dilemma, the apostle came to their aid. He does not attempt an explanation of the doctrine. This, he knew, was beyond him. He acknowledges that it is a mystery; but attempts to show that this doctrine, so mysterious in itself, is not more so than manifold phenomena in the natural world, to the truth of which their senses bore the most satisfying testimony. He even seizes upon some of these to illustrate the doctrine of the resurrection, drawing an analogy between the reproduction of the human body and the reproduction of the vegetable seed, after it has been buried in the earth. He shows that one is a prodigy, equally as incomprehensible as the other. After closing his argument, he exhorts them to continued steadfastness. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable." As though he had said, "Seeing, beloved brethren, that this article of your faith, one of the most mysterious and difficult of explanation in all the canon of your belief, is neither more mysterious nor difficult of explanation than a plain fact in nature which you see demonstrated each returning season, and seeing, also, that this abundantly sustained fact in nature furnishes you so striking a type of the great truth of the gospel, the

resurrection of the body — therefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable. Let none of these difficulties move you. Be ye careful that ye do not wrest these great things which God has revealed, some of which are ‘hard to be understood,’ to your own destruction.”

You will perceive, from what has been said, that the subject for the hour is *Christian stability*. The explanation and enforcement of this duty will claim your attention.

Christian stability, in our present connection, may be defined as *a firm conviction of the truth of the Christian religion, together with an undoubting confidence in the truths of God, as revealed in his word.*

The religion of Jesus consists of theory and practice, the first preparing for the latter, and sustaining to it, in some respects, a causative relation. It seems proper, however, that in attempting an enforcement of the apostle’s words, we should confine our remarks to stability in religious faith—meaning by the phrase, a hearty belief in the Christian system, and an unhesitating confidence in its clearly revealed doctrines.

It is matter of amazement to any one who has not inquired into it, that the belief of so many persons is in constant ebb and flow. To-day they receive the Bible as the depository of the mind of God, and to-morrow they are found the subjects of mental hesitation. Thus are they ever vacillating, and this without concerning themselves with an earnest personal inquiry into the foundation on

which the Bible rests its claims to truth. It is an unsettled condition of faith, from which but little comfort, and less of Christian development, can spring. What now, regarding man as an intellectual and moral being, is the best antidote to this condition? We answer unhesitatingly, an honest, prayerful examination of the Bible, and a daily obedience of its commands. Let any man do thus, and he will soon find himself settled upon a rock, against which the waves may dash without harm.

It is of the first importance that a man should make himself acquainted with the evidences of the Christian religion, as far as his capacity and leisure may allow. On this subject the Church, apart from her ministry, and with here and there an exception among the laity, is asleep, and has been so since her organization. We do not deny to her talents, intelligence, and general information on all subjects pertaining to business, science and art, yet upon the point we are now considering she has shown an indifference that is amazing. How many in our congregations are there who are prepared to defend the gospel, as a system of truth, with credit? And yet they have been living, many of them for years, in blind confidence that it is true. This confidence they have received from their forefathers. It has come to them through a long and pious ancestry, and has been supported by the public favor with which Christianity has been received in our country. Their orthodoxy has

been entailed; they have inherited it in the form of Methodism, Presbyterianism, etc., from their parents, just as they have inherited their property; and most of them blindly cling to those forms in which their faith has been cast, with the same devotion that marks their estimate of worldly goods, without so much as ever putting forth an effort to know whether the foundation—much less the sectarian structure they have inherited—be laid in truth or in falsehood. This may do for the simple-minded; but he who has found out that he is a person, with personal responsibility, cannot be satisfied to have his belief transmitted to him from a parentage that was regarded as sound in the faith. It will either drive him into infidelity or hypocrisy. He cannot silence thought; and thought, when aroused, if not directed in an earnest investigation—if stifled or driven back upon itself, will lead to a practical denial of the truth of religion, or to an external conformity, of which, convenience or policy, or both, will be the motive and the end. If thought be awakened, and fair play be given it, an ultimate must be reached before it will rest. Mere belief, because belief was professed by the past generation, or is popular now, is no belief at all to the man who realizes his personality. To him the deed of conveyance, though executed by the prayers, and vigils, and blameless lives of an honored ancestry, and transferred to him from the lips of a dying father or mother, with all the solem-

nities of the death-bed and the parting-hour to recommend it, would be insufficient without personal examination and assurance. He is compelled, from the nature of his mind, to have some solidier basis whereon to rest his belief, than the simple fact that those who gave him being entertained it, and died giving testimony of their faith. We admit that any man of ordinary sensibility would be propitiated favorably toward confidence, that his reverence for the Christian system would be greatly increased by all this; yet it will not, in the absence of what we are contending for, satisfy him. He must know for himself, and from a personal survey, the nature and strength of those pillars on which he has planted his hopes for two worlds—for time and eternity.

It may be said that all are not thus unbelieving. We admit it. Where, then, the need of this acquaintance with the evidences of Christianity? We answer, that if for nothing more than that a man be armed for the defence of truth, it challenges attention.

There is much in the aspect of the times that calls upon the friends of religion, in all classes and conditions, to array themselves in this defensive armor, and prepare for battle. We believe that, before this century shall have expired, the world will have witnessed the fiercest contest over the truth as it is in Jesus, that has been seen since the expiring cry of the dying Nazarene rang from the

hill of agony and blood. We believe, also, that if the friends of the Crucified, everywhere, will but demean themselves nobly and worthily, as they can and should, the issues of that coming contest will bind the brow of truth with garlands greener and fresher than have been gathered from all her past victories combined. He, then, who would prepare himself to do battle valiantly for the truth, must *know* that truth—must prepare himself with reasons for the hope it gives—reasons, too, that will have power to silence those who question, and to cause the hot blood of shame to crimson the cheeks of such as would assail Christianity with the foul slime of vulgar vituperation.

Fear not, brethren, that the truth will ever suffer from fair inquest, however rigid and searching it may be. As one of her most eloquent English defenders has said, “Christianity is not the grave, but the broad field of vigorous inquiry.” Her evidences are overpowering, when searched with a sincere desire to know the truth, and a fixed purpose to obey that truth when known. In such a case they meet the humble student armed with an energy that is resistless. They have been laughed to scorn, we know, and attempts have been made to set them aside, yet for centuries they have been accumulating, until now, the roll of six thousand years is crowded with them. Each century, as it has come forth to play its part in the calendar of time, and each generation, as it came, and passed into the silent eternities that lie in

the charnel-house of ages, has borne testimony to the truth of that system to whose defence we are summoning you.

Not these only, but every department accessible to research, and every field exposed to human observation, has laid a tribute on the altar of our faith. History, with its lore; science, with its wonders; battle-fields, with their lost and buried empires; sepulchres, with their mouldering dead; martyrdom, with its crimsoned blocks and hissing fires; olden cities, with their din and strife; nature, with her valleys, and hills, and mountains, and seas—all, all unite in giving evidence to the truth in which the hope of humanity is bound up; while fulfilled prophecy and well-attested miracles stand out as imperishable seals on every page of that truth.

We know that infidelity boasts of her monopoly of mind, and we grant much to her in this respect; yet we are persuaded that the conclusions of those who have spoken in her defence have been arrived at by placing fetters on reason, and forgetting God as he stands revealed in creation. Let a man go forth with an intellect in bonds neither to prejudice, pride, nor corruption—let him go forth thus free into the vast fields of God's creation, and it seems impossible that he should return with other than an overwhelming conviction that God *is*, and that he is what the Bible declares him. To him who is of an adoring spirit, nature furnishes high confirmation to the truth of revelation. She hath

a voice that singeth sweetly of her Maker; she weareth a garniture woven by his hands, and which he hath spread over her mountains and valleys, and laid upon her woodlands and great waters; she hath a speech which goeth out even to the far ends of the earth, and in alternations of calmness and thunder telleth of God.

Without pausing to consider them definitely, we would recommend you to study the evidences of your faith—the internal, external, and collateral proofs that sustain it. More particularly do we commend to you the first.

The ground of unbelief has been changed within a few years past, so that we have not now the vulgar adversaries of the last century to contend with. We have adversaries though, far more dangerous: adversaries who profess a high reverence for the truth, and whose lives exhibit the admirable virtues of Christian morality. Claiming to hold in high esteem the Sacred Scriptures, they conduct the assault under profession of an honest desire to release the truth from the dungeons in which they affirm the superstition of ages has immured it. They therefore introduce new modes of interpretation and philosophical theories of explanation, by which are lost to those who cling to the gospel as a system of spiritual power those gracious consolations that have gladdened so many thousands in poverty and sorrow. These efforts of modern times call on us, if we would be secure in our trust, and armed for the defence of the truth, to make our-

selves familiar with the simple, unadorned lessons of Jesus, and to know the word of God, both as to the excellent code of morality it teaches and the important doctrines it makes known.

In connection with the evidences of Christianity, allow me to urge upon your constant attention that of experience. It is, after all, the most satisfying. We may read learned books, collate prophecy, stand awed before the wonders done by Jesus; we may bend low, and catch the throbbing testimony which nature pours from out her great burdened heart; but after all, a sound Christian experience, such as Paul had, and to which he recurred when he said, "*I know whom I believe,*" and such as thousands of our pious negroes can furnish, outweighs every thing. Turn not away from this branch of evidence with a sneer, saying that it may do for the unlettered, but that you prefer a loftier realm of proof—one that will give more honor to reason, and be in evidence of a becoming dignity of mind. We bless God that it is adapted to uncultivated minds; for there are thousands of this class in our land whose souls have been redeemed, and for whose salvation the gospel has been sent.

We bless God for a gospel that comes down to ignorance itself, and says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye and drink!"—that does not pass by any, nor show respect to persons, by a graduating scale that would dishonor God's universal fatherhood.

We rejoice that the way is one, and that, while

that one way is so plain that "fools need not err therein," it is one of such glory as even to challenge the interest of angels; for while the erudite scholar walks that path, and the unlearned child of toil presses hard after, the angels bend over the crowded way in anxious desire to know those mysteries that are made known plainest of all by experience.

If you have given attention to the culture of your mind, and have accustomed yourself to vigorous thought, let me say to you that a sound experience will prove your mightiest safeguard, and, it may be, the only one, amid the perils of your pilgrimage. There are now living, men whose evidence to this truth has been laid before the world. Men are they of no mean capacity—men whose acquirements are equal to any who now hear me. These thought it no disparagement to intellectual greatness to sit down at the feet of the Great Teacher, and learn, as did Mary, to seek and to share an indwelling conscious knowledge of Jesus; to have their inner faculties so stirred by the abiding and witnessing Spirit of God as constrained them to break out in transports of rejoicing and praise; and these have given as their testimony, that but for the assurance given by experience, instead of being engaged now, as many of them are, in defending the gospel, they would be numbered among her open opposers. Experience was their quadrant, amid seas dark with tempests and lashed with storms. At many points of their voyage, their

only joy and hope came from a personal knowledge, a felt and therefore known experience that Christ dwelt in them, "the hope of glory." Reason could not master the truths that stood out immeasurably broad before their minds, nor solve the problems of providence thick-lying around them. Doubts arose, and "would not down." Driven from every point of anchorage to which reason pointed, they turned the soul in upon itself, and she came forth with the victor's palm in her hand, singing, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Doubt became dumb, and despair fled before this knowledge—a knowledge not gained from books, but from the Spirit, "for the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

Thanks be unto God that it has been written, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself;" and all honor to our Heavenly Father that to so many thousands this declaration has been made good! We may know God, and his Son, Jesus Christ. This knowledge is better than could be gathered from all the encyclopedias of the world. Other knowledge is valuable, and should be sought; but this, first of all, and more than all. It arms the wise and the ignorant for conflict with doubt, and entrenches them so that unbelief cannot reach them. Go tell him who has it that religion is not true; that his hope is a dream, his Christ a fable. He may be ignorant of science, of

history, of letters even; yet you could as easily persuade him that his own hand formed the ether-eal ocean above his head, and peopled it with those islands of light that float upon its blue bosom, as that his hope in Christ is vain. He *believes*, and “has the *witness in himself*.” O! know you the wondrous meaning of this great saying? Have you, O my people, gone into those abysses of Christian experience to which these mighty words refer? Do you *believe* in that stupendous sense that brings God to the soul in the form of an assuring Spirit? Have you this witness in yourselves, a witness which all may have? O! whatever else you may neglect, let this claim your attention. Let nothing break your grasp on experimental religion. Hold on to a knowledge of him “whom you have believed”—a knowledge that serves as an internal witness to the fact of your heirship with God, and joint-heirship with Jesus Christ.

The ground, however, on which many have their sorest conflicts, is not that of infidelity so much as perplexity. They do not reject the Bible as false, but they find that many of its doctrines are hard to be understood, and this leads to weakness of faith, and, if not arrested, will end in agonizing doubt, and, perhaps, in blank infidelity. This was the condition of the Corinthians at the time the apostle addressed them in the words of the text, and this, we think, is true with many of this generation.

The tendency of the theology and the philosophic literature of Europe, at this time, is to intellectual

pride; and standing—as, unfortunately, we have ever done—as a dependent on her for religious and philosophic opinions, the presumption is that the same arrogance will, sooner or later, leaven our national mind. Its work has already begun. An iron-cast orthodoxy has so long kept the theologic mind of our country cuirassed, that we fear the result of this dawning freedom. We are apprehensive that it may result in mental anarchy, and that in the convulsions that will attend, too many will settle down satisfied, or at least at ease, in those unsound theories which a vain philosophy is generating in Europe.

The origin of these is to be found in the mysteries that are met with in the Bible. Men take occasion from this to avow the whole record a sublime myth, and yet give us in exchange transcendental systems, over which and around which the darkness of an uncomprehended and an incomprehensible mysticism hangs. Admitting all they claim, wherein are we to be gainers by the exchange? Better for us that we hold on to the old way, inquiring diligently for the old paths wherein so many found certainty, and in which many of us who are now disquieted found a great peace and a large blessedness, when we were more simple and child-like.

The Bible is either an exhibit of the Divine mind, or it is not. If the former, there is nothing more reasonable than that it should be above our comprehension. If the Author be infinite, and the reader only finite, how can the latter, without pre-

sumption, hope for a perfect knowledge of what is revealed? Can the finite comprehend the infinite? To affirm this would be to make the finite identical with the infinite. The very fact of comprehending what is infinite, would exalt the finite to the infinite. As long as there exists an immeasurable distance between God and man, so long must that book, purporting to be an out-picturing of the former, remain above the understanding of the latter. He may know that certain things are revealed, and many of these, having relation to himself, may be understood by his finite mind, while others still, having mutual relation to him and to the infinite, may be partially mastered by his understanding; yet on those great subjects that connect themselves with an infinite God and a vast future, known only to infinite wisdom, how can the finite expect to have certain knowledge?

We would not undervalue human learning. We admit that it furnishes a vast apparatus, by which many grammatical, historical, and philological difficulties may be demolished, and that therefore it behooves every man who would consecrate all to God, to acquire as much human learning as possible; but we will not yield the point, that after learning has collected all her treasures of wisdom, and fused them into a sanctified knowledge, there will still be difficulties connected with the great subjects of Divine revelation, beyond removal. For revelation not to have these, would be to "limit it by the powers of reason, and therefore to exclude those very topics

on which, reason being insufficient, revelation is required."

God is never mystic in language. His words are plain; but the truths we find enwrapped are sometimes far beyond us. How simple the question, "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" in which his omnipresence is taught; yet how uncomprehended, even yet, is the truth declared in that simple language! And so with many of those doctrines on which the best and holiest have been divided for centuries. They come to us in intelligible speech, but their depths are deeper than our soundings. The Father has graciously given us ability to understand whatever he has revealed as necessary to salvation, and, to encourage us, has promised fuller revelations of himself, in the ages of the soul's-life which are to come. To indulge in doubt now, is as barren of reason as to doubt that nature and science have any thing of truth and reality, because they present fields where the mind has never travelled with certainty. Science reveals the fact that there are wandering worlds in the vast void above us, and observation teaches that nature lies all around and about us; yet who can tell, with certainty, the paths where those worlds travel, or the laws connected with their amazing mechanism? Who can tell of the growth of flowers, the structure of pebbles, or the ephemeral life of animalculæ? Attempt to analyze a simple grain of sand, a wanton zephyr, or the red fire-flame, as it roars in the chimney or glows in the grate, and how vain the effort!

Our knowledge of the material universe, as to extent even, may be imperfect. For aught we know, and as many conjecture, there are, beside what science has discovered, "untravelling deserts in the kingdom of our God." Astronomy may tongue the stars, and call down songs of clearest articulation from their thrones of splendor; yet who knows what spheres are rolling on beyond mortal ken, and sounding forth a harmony heard only by the far-journeying angels? Turn to physiology, anatomy, or any of those sciences common even in our commonest schools, and you are baffled at every point in your efforts to arrive at ultimates in your retrospective survey. Take the laws of muscular motion, in physical, and the laws of perception, memory, will, etc., in mental science, and explain them, if you can.

Take human life, or, as we prefer to call it, providence, and see how much you can understand of what is matter of daily and personal experience with you. You meet with what seems an affliction, and it issues in good—with what seems the semblance of good, and it brings evil; and all, too, from no cause perceptible to reason. In this way the stream of life runs on, beneath heavens that are now gilded with glorious sunshine, and now darkened by leaden clouds. We know not what is for good, and can only wait in trust and in hope.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform:
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

He enters all habitations thus, attends all footsteps, envelops life, mantles death, and covers the grave with the unknown. We only know what faith teaches—that what God does is right; that in all trouble we may weep, but not despair; that reason must walk in submission to faith now; and that in another and more enlarged sphere she may seek for loftier truth.

And now, shall we who see all this, and who painfully experience it, every day, and who are compelled to an admission of it, without its impairing our confidence in nature, and science, and providence,—shall we, I say, entertain grave doubts on gospel truths because they too are veiled?

If the material, with which we have had every means of acquaintance; if providence, whose subjects we have been and still are—if these are ever presenting facts, whose nature, fundamental laws, determinations, etc., are unknown to you, how, we ask, in the language of Richard Watson, can you expect a system so “intimately connected with human spirits, of the nature of which we know so little, and with an eternal state, of which we know comparatively nothing,” to be without its deep things? What can you look for, in such a system, than that it should contain chapters whose meaning we may not understand now, but which will be for ever unfolding to our minds in a world where reason will have an unimpaired energy, and imagination be steeped in a diviner beauty? God himself, whose being is the foundation of our reli-

gion, is beyond our line of thought. He reveals himself as *being*; yet who can fathom that being? He causes his attributes to rise before us like those awe-inspiring worlds that steal out upon the canvas of the sky at evening time: we see their grandeur; we are awed by their majesty; but we only know that he is the One Eternal and Absolute Sovereign of all things. We read in his word that the Son, who was equal with the Father, became a man; and yet we know not how it was done. That mysterious coalition of the human and Divine, which our books call the Incarnation, and by which hell was discomfited and man redeemed, stands out as a sculptured truth in the temple of revelation; yet what draping of mystery covers it! So with the Divine prescience—the freedom of the will—the resurrection of the dead, including the bodies in which they are to come forth—the nature and state of the soul, after it leaves the body, until the tabernacle of dust is recovered; and a thousand other truths that can be approached no more than those drops of glory that tremble in midnight radiance along the milky way.

They are revealed as facts, as science reveals hers; and although we may speculate and build hypothesis on hypothesis, until time grows gray, we will die at last, knowing only that they have been revealed. They are God's truths, planted, it may be, along the highway of our immortality, to hasten us on by the hope that what we know not now we shall know in God's time. O be steadfast, then, urging reason on to the task of finding out whether God has thus

taught, and then subduing her into a consoling trust that the hour is coming when all that is now dark shall be illumined by the flashings forth of a brighter and ever-brightening light.

O wonderful system, to supply all our present needs, and yet beckon us on by promising revelations so vast as that an infinite home and an eternal lifetime must be ours in which to study them !

As you find these, then, in your study of truth, my brethren, be steadfast and even joyful. As the lover of star-eyed science, whose glass has pointed toward the heavens for long months, and whose eyes have gazed in weariness on the mighty map of the firmament, the while hails with joy the discovery of a new world, so you, with the telescope of faith, search for truth ; and when to you, even as to the pale child of science, there may float out some dimly seen and mystic planet of truth, whose existence is all that you are assured of, rejoice with a great joy that to your inner vision that much is given. Keep your vision fixed on the heaven of truth, and although it may take in orbs of bewildering magnitude, and of far-off and as yet unknown splendor, O, remember that, however dim their outline and veiled their glory, they were lighted by the same Almighty God who in the morning of creation shook

—————“Ten thousand worlds,
Like golden dewdrops, from his waving wing,
To roll in beauty through abysmal space,
And chant the chorus of his love divine :”

that he whose hand guides these along their orbits, and governs the maddened comet-star as it streams through the mist of dread infinitude, has kindled *their* glory also, and will, if we are faithful, reveal them to our anxious souls in some coming *æon* of our glorious immortality!

I rejoice that all has *not* been made plain: that there are such vast fields outside the circle of earthly knowledge—such golden isles beyond the shore of the summer-land toward which we are voyaging, that invite us on. I am glad when I read of Paul's speechlessness when, in a vision, he was caught up to the third heaven, that heaven where those isles lie, amid their surroundings of light and glory more beautiful than those cloud-continents which we sometimes see glittering in the light of setting suns. It fires me with an intense longing to hear those wondrous words—those words of unspeakable import—words which even God's anointed dare not pollute by flinging upon the tainted air of this sinful planet.

As I read these things, I am made sensible that

“T is not the whole of life to live:”

that

“Beyond this vale of tears,
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years;
And all that life is love;”

and that while, for the good man, to live would be Christ, to die would be gain. As I meet with

questions in God's word that I cannot answer, pages I do not understand, and doctrines before which reason falls impotent, I will no longer fling the cry of *déspair* in the face of Heaven, but still read, and ponder, and trust. I "shall know." O blessed words!—I "*shall know*." This is enough! It gives immortal energy. It heightens the rapture of the eternal Sabbath. It tells us that we are to be employed for ever—that we shall be engaged in studies beyond angel-minds. It tells me of progress—eternal progress in truth: that truth is eternal, and that, through the grace of our Lord, it has become the bride of the eternal soul: that it is to live when the heavens are no more: that when the music of the northern harp has been hushed, and "the wild, weird chiming of the Pleiades" forgotten: that when Orion, and red Arcturus, and the wholly starry train that made the fabled music of the spheres, shall have been laid away in the sepulchre of departed worlds, truth will still live—that I too will still live: that having then ascended the mount above, I shall see God; and that having trusted him amid the darkness and the tempest of time, I shall then be permitted, like Moses, to roll back the clouds and talk face to face with him!

Brethren, be steadfast! Heed not the suggestions of infidelity. Struggle with might against the eddying waves of doubt. Live up to the truth you understand. Trust the Father in all that lies beyond you; and during the uncounted ages of the soul's lifetime, those truths, over which you now

wrestle, will be seen coming out, like illuminated globes, from their mystic shadows; and as they roll on in the “high flaming” beauty of their revealed magnificence, you will join redeemed millions and myriads of angels in the wondering exclamation: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

DISCOURSE VII.

The Christian Worker.

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER.

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord.”—1 Cor. xv. 58.

THERE are two extremes in matters of religion, toward one or the other of which most persons are prone, and which, if indulged in, will prove hurtful to the soul. One is, a profound attention to the theory of the gospel, including its evidences and the philosophy of its doctrines, without a corresponding concern in its practical operations: the other is a reckless, and often bigoted, pursuit of what is conceived to be duty, in the absence of a becoming effort to find what duty is. In one or the other of these classes a majority of those who claim Jesus as Master may be found; and because of this there exists a vast amount of imperfect Christianity in the world. The result, in the one instance, is a substitution of what is called orthodoxy for personal holiness; while, in the other,

holiness is displaced by sentiment, and religion made to consist in frames and feelings.

With the first class, it is sufficient that a man is prepared for a contest with infidelity, or armed against the encroachments of heresy. It is quite enough that he is thoroughly read in the articles of his Church and in polemic divinity: that he is conversant with the history of creeds, and councils, and edicts: that he has learned the definitions and distinctions in the science of theology, and has, by patient toil, mastered the perplexing questions of the schools.

The other class hold that it is of small importance how little a man knows of doctrine or Church history, or to what school of theology he belongs, so he is what they falsely call a spiritual man: that is, so he be sufficiently impressionable as to weep freely under touching appeals from the pulpit, or when, in the class-room, his soul comes in contact with others of like susceptibility. If to this capability of emotion can be added the luxury of rejoicing on revival occasions, it is of but little consequence with him how meagre his knowledge of God's word may be.

We have allusion in this to the extremists in these extremes—to their natural tendencies. In the one, the danger is formalism, and in the other it is fanaticism.

He who aspires to the true ideal of Christian excellence must avoid both. He must aim at a medium—a medium, too, which, discarding the

evils, will possess itself of the good found in both, and show as the result a Christian having an enlightened understanding and a warm heart, a sound theory and a consistent practice. This, in our estimation, is the highest style of Christian.

Our purpose at this hour is to warn you against the dangers of formalism: to persuade you to add to an enlightened gospel theory, and an intimate acquaintance with the gospel system, as to the evidences on which it is based and the doctrines it unfolds, an equally enlightened and constant practice of the duties it enjoins. If we succeed in this, we shall feel that we will have contributed some little in the formation of your Christian character.

The entire verse, a portion of which only have we selected for our present purpose, reads thus: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The true idea of a Christian presented here is action—action, too, under the Divine injunction, and in harmony with Him, as one to whom we belong. The text calls to us to work. It defines this work to which we are summoned as the Lord's work, which, as his agents or property, we are to carry on, and in which we are to abound continually. This, brethren, is the leading thought, with its several phases, presented in the text; and to its consideration you are now invited.

We hold that the Almighty has placed all his intelligences under the law of action. In fact, it is a law, the manifestations of which are not only seen among the rational part of creation, but the inanimate as well. Wherever we turn, proof meets us that God made nothing for mere exhibition; that all that bears the impress of his creative energy gives signs of motion; that every thing, from the minutest to the mightiest, including things rational, animal, and vegetable, embracing the spiritual and the material, the land and the sea, with whatever of animate or inanimate forms are found upon and in them; and reaching out to the great heavens, with their circling orbs, and the vast atmospheric ocean, in which, like vessels of light, they sail on for ever: that all these give evidence of life, and are designed by the universal Father to add to His glory. These all are never at rest, but in their sphere, and according to His appointment to whom they belong, are always in motion. The ocean ebbs and flows. Nature is always sending out her flowers and fruits. The grass in the meadow, the grain in the field, the flower in the garden, and the tree in the woods, are as so many children, which, in their time and season, Nature gives back to God. Every thing is at its task, and doing its appointed work. The rill issuing from the summit of yonder mountain wanders on, amid tangled woods and over moss-grown rocks, cheered by its low babble and silvery laugh, until at last we see it in an ocean-world,

wrapped in the dark embroidery of the storm, and mingling its thunder-shout with the roar of the tempest. And so with all things else. There is nothing idle or useless in nature.

But, coming back to man, if we turn to the Old Testament, we find that the first law of our physical being, published after the fall, was that of toil. God said unto Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground." There can be neither happiness nor progress outside of conformity to this law. The prosperity of our race, our success in business, our enjoyment of health, our progress in virtue, our usefulness in life, all depend on our obedience to this law.

However important physical labor may be—and it is important—and whatever indirect connection it may bear with the import of the apostle's words, we have not time now to speak of it. The work with which we are more particularly concerned is called "the work of the Lord," and, while it embraces physical toil, has more immediate reference to that engagedness of the spiritual or moral powers which has for its object the salvation of the soul. It is that work which God in his word, or by his providence, has laid all under contribution to do, and to which all are called.

The Almighty, not less in the moral than in the physical world, has connected success with action as the condition, and made happiness to depend on labor. Now, as no man in the exercise of reason

can expect prosperity in business in the absence of necessary attention in the way of diligence, foresight, etc., that man is chargeable with folly who looks for spiritual improvement while living in spiritual indolence. He must work if he would increase the treasures of his soul. He must put the faculties of that soul into a vigorous and healthy exercise if he would have them grow and strengthen. If, forgetting this great law of spiritual as well as physical life, he gives himself up to indolence and sentimental dreaming, when all his inner faculties should be brought into full play, he will keep his moral nature in swaddling-bands. Men need to be aroused on this subject, and taught to put away torpor; to summon every power of the immortal spirit from the grave of inaction. There must be a change here before the Church can make the world feel her influence in the proportion of her capability. There must be a moral resurrection of the dead faculties of the soul, and these faculties must then be sent out into the highways of sanctified thought, and into the broad field of moral enterprise, with the command of the Master, "Work while it is called day, for the night cometh, when no man can work," ever sounding among them. We are to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

1. *In considering this work with something like system, we remark first, that it has reference to duties we are to do ourselves and for ourselves.*

We mean by this, that in the work of salvation

we have individual duties to perform ; that every man has a personal work to do in the way of making preparation for the kingdom of grace here, and of glory above.

In taking this position, we mean no disparagement to the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. We do not undervalue the atonement, nor derogate from Him who is our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." The doctrine we have enunciated does not rob the Son of the merit of our salvation. This we hope to make plain to you, if we can have your patient attention.

The salvation of a sinner is, beyond doubt, primarily of God ; that is, when the sinner was without legitimate claim on the Divine clemency, God the Father, of his infinite mercy, made provision for his recovery. This provision made it entirely practicable for the hopeless outcast to be restored to the high position from which he had fallen, and that, too, on a basis which, while it pardoned the offender, vindicated the law and honor of Him against whom the offence had been committed. Now this wonderful provision, you will remember, was made independent of the party for whose benefit it was devised. That party was never consulted, and that, too, for the reason that he could contribute nothing toward the scheme, and because the scheme itself, being the offspring of mercy, should therefore have its source in the free and absolute grace of God. In this way, then, the sal-

vation of a sinner is considered primarily, or provisionally, of God.

Regarded secondarily, or conditionally, however, that salvation is of man. By this affirmation, so startling, no doubt, to some, we mean simply, that the gracious provisions of infinite mercy in our behalf, and which that mercy offers us so freely in the gospel, will be of no avail unless we, in the exercise of the faculty of will, or self-determination, choose to accept that mercy upon the conditions on which it is tendered.

In short, we hold that the mercy—merely as such—offered the world by the all-gracious Father, will not necessarily save the family of Adam; that any one of that family may, by a rejection of that mercy, not only fail to share in its saving effects, but infinitely augment his guilt, and increase the punitive visitation of wrath, to which, by such rejection, he will be exposed.

We ask now, since it is within the creature's power not to save himself primarily, but to accept the salvation provided for him, and also to reject it, does it not follow that, as far as he does accept or reject, he becomes tributary to his salvation or damnation, and may therefore be said to have a personal work in that salvation or damnation?

What has been said on this subject has respect, as you have perceived, to the beginning of our salvation—our reception of it in the sense of choice.

Now what is true of our entrance upon this work, is equally so as to our continuance in it. If we

have correctly studied the science of salvation, it is conditional throughout, from the hour in which God seals us as his children, to the moment of our being crowned in the kingdom of his glory. If a failure to accept of offered mercy, while a man is an overt violator of the law of God, renders certain his eternal destruction should he die unrepentant and unpardoned, will not disobedience to that law, after we are sealed as God's children, secure for us a like destruction in the absence of penitence and pardon? If acceptance in the first instance, being the condition of pardon, be refused, and the loss of the soul follow, will not the refusal of faithfulness after pardon, that being the condition on which our continuance in the favor of God depends, as necessarily lead to the soul's loss? Nothing seems plainer; and if these questions are answered affirmatively, as we think they must be, does it not follow that every Christian has a conditional work to do after, as well as before his conversion, and that to neglect this is to destroy his immortality?

But some may ask, Does not this view of the subject detract from the honor of God as the Saviour of all men? The negative of this must appear, when it is remembered that the ability by which the sinner is enabled to choose life, to accept of pardon, and to continue in well-doing, is from God. It is a power which he has graciously made to inhere in our moral constitution, and because of this the creature, even in the exercise of it, has not whereof he may glory.

This view of the Divine and human agency, in the salvation of a soul, is taught by St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." Here there are two wills and two persons introduced, as concerned in the work of salvation—the will and power of God working in the sinner in the way of bestowing all needful ability, and the will of the sinner exercising this ability in the way of choosing salvation, and in working out that holiness without which none can be saved. His argument was, that since God works in us to will and to do, we are laid under solemn obligation, and that, too, on peril of losing our souls if we fail in doing it, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

While, therefore, we are free to admit that it is God that saves us, and would give him hearty and eternal thanks therefor, we desire never to forget that he saves us on a principle alike honoring to Him and dignifying to the object of his regard. He saves us as intelligent spirits, and not as mere material entities. He saves us by providing a ransom for our enthralled souls; by offering that ransom to our acceptance; by endowing us with wills, in the exercise of which we can voluntarily receive that offered ransom. He brings with the merciful tender high and commanding considerations against our rejection of it, and encouraging exhortations to faithfulness, after we have accepted the blessing of

pardon. He promises abundant help in all our engagements as his followers, assuring us that his grace will be sufficient amid the temptations and conflicts of our warfare, and stimulating us to endurance, even to the end, by holding out before the eye of hope a glorious reward, and by the unveiled prospect of an eternal rest when the term of toil closes. In this way he saves us—not as machines, incapable of voluntary action, but as high-born spirits allied to him, and kindred with angels—spirits who are to do their part

“In the world’s broad field of battle,—
In the bivouac of life;”

and whose reward will consist in eating the fruit of the tree of life, and reigning for ever in the kingdom of God.

Every man, then, who would attain to a place among the redeemed at God’s right hand, must work. He has that to do which none other, not even God himself, can do for him. It is a work exclusively his own, laid on him by the Captain of salvation, and cannot be neglected without undoing his hopes of the future. He must repent for himself, or the pardon will never descend. He must pray himself, or God will withhold the blessing of his favor. His own will, enlightened by the Spirit of God, and made calm and self-possessed by almighty grace, must go forward in the way of self-denial and in the royal work of entire consecration to God. He must keep the eyes of his spirit ever

open and always watching, and preserve a faithful watch over all those passions that seek to beleaguer the soul, and waste it of its invaluable treasures.

These, brethren, are personal duties. They enter by an inseparable relation into our spiritual engagements, and make a part of that work of the Lord in which, as his children, we are to abound. I would impress upon you the need of attention to these duties, and to all else connected with your salvation, as a personal enterprise in which you have embarked the hopes of eternity.

You stand forth in this relation, invested with a personal responsibility that could not be increased even though you were the only intelligence in the wide universe. The fact that you have a place on one of an innumerable family of worlds; that you are bound in interest and relation to many on a planet numbering eight hundred millions of souls; that you have membership in some one of the religious denominations of the western hemisphere; that you engage from Sabbath to Sabbath in the worship of God with a congregation combining intelligence and piety; that the circle of your kindred, together with the dear ones around your own fireside, may include the holiest of the good;—all this and these, whatever of advantage they may bring, will avail you nothing, if, with general privileges like these, you neglect personal duty. Their only effect will be to add to your guilt.

As an individual, you are making your way alone to the bar of God. It changes not at all the cha-

racter of your individual accountability that an entire generation is bearing you company in your hastening approach to the judgment. Each member of that company lives alone in the sense of responsibility, and must die alone. In this personal sense are the retributions of the judgment to be awarded, and the bliss or agony of eternity shared.

Ah! if I could but make you sensible of all that this solemn thought imports, I should have hope that the great concerns of your immortality would engage more of your most earnest thoughts in the time to come! What you need to do is to separate yourselves, as to your personal culture and development, from all others; to cut with a firm hand those tendrils of your nature that cling in ruinous dependence on others; and, under solemn conviction of the truth of that thought we are urging on you, go forward with the energy of an immortal spirit, and with a heroism that would welcome death joyfully, rather than purchase life at the price of duty.

O! be engaged in the work in which neither friend nor kindred can help you! Remember, that although a single combat as to human participation, it is one in which you may seek and obtain the supplies of an all-sufficient grace. By this, you may be able to meet temptation with a manly resistance; to acquit yourselves of duty so as to bring glory to God; to endure hardness, as good soldiers in the army of the Lord; to suffer persecution for

righteousness' sake in the exercise of a meek and forgiving disposition; to submit to affliction such as the Father may permit with holy patience; to always look through the gloom that shuts out the sun of worldly happiness, and behold the bow of promise pillowed upon the distant heaven; and to feel, as you gaze, that it is a symbol that the storm is retiring, and the pledge of a coming day and an abiding-place where there shall be "no more night." O! work then, while the day of life shines around you; for the night-shades will soon gather, and in the long darkness that will then come, "no man can work."

2. *This work is also social, having respect to others.*

Religion, as we have seen, contemplates man in his segregated being, and with his individual duties. It does more. It presents him as sustaining a variety of relations as a social being, which of necessity bring with them a variety of duties called social obligations.

This being true, the work of a Christian is not all done when he has fully met and faithfully performed what he owes himself, or what may be due from him, as a person, to God. He is a debtor to others by the constitution in which the Author of his being has placed him, and is as much bound to a liquidation of that indebtedness as though it were due himself. This is in agreement with the benevolence of the gospel, which declares that "no man liveth to himself;" and whose Divine author devoted his life to an exemplification of the pre-

cept, "As ye have opportunity, do good unto all men."

It is in harmony, also, with the social constitution of the human race. Man's existence is a dualism, the one part being segregate and the other aggregate; and while in the one is seen his individual constitution and his personal nature, in the other is unfolded his collective being, including the strong social bonds that give worlds, peoples, and communities strength and happiness. This latter, or aggregated view of mankind, when examined, is found to possess innumerable relations, dependencies, and interdependencies among men, involving the whole social framework in endlessly diversified duties, all having connection with that work of the Lord in which the Christian is "always to abound." The entire range of these duties is too interminable to admit of specification in a single discourse. They grow out of our social relations, and cannot, on account of their number, be enumerated here.

It may do some good suggestively, however, for us to call your attention to our social constitution under the idea of circles. There is, first, the home-circle; then the neighborhood; then the county; then the State; then the nation; then the hemisphere; and then the world. These all have distinctive claims and appropriate duties, and to the performance of these, the Christian, as possibility is given, should address himself. To this he is called by the spirit and tendency of religion; and

to be deaf to these appeals is in that proportion to be an imperfect Christian.

In matters of duty, my brethren, religion is unselfishness. It puts away self when self would stand in the way of good-doing, and consents to follow in gladness the beckoning form of "good-will toward all men." Who has not seen the manifestation of this unselfish feature of religion on revival occasions! A man, for instance, not remarkable for his benevolence in the community, is led to seek the favor of God. After much wrestling with the Offended, he obtains pardon, and has an inward assurance that God has given him a new heart. "Old things pass away," and all things wear a newness to his soul. He soon wants his family to share in his new-got treasure. It is not long until he desires his neighbors and the whole community to become partakers of his hope. He does not stop there. With his soul expanding, as he looks abroad with the eye of growing intelligence, and sees a world lying in the arms of the wicked one, he cannot repress the outgoing desire that these all might be brought to know God, and enjoy that high blessedness of which, through the abundant mercy of Jesus, he has been made partaker. He not only prays for this, but if he give himself up to Divine tutelage, he will learn that he belongs entirely to God, and will, as a faithful steward, be found contributing his worldly means to the work of spreading the gospel everywhere. Religion is never more catholic than when its sub-

jects are at the mercy-seat. We have heard men approach God in prayer, and, beginning with a petition for a personal blessing, they continued to multiply personalities and take in varied conditions, until, throwing the arms of their desire around the whole world, they bore it up in anxious supplication to the Father. We conclude that however disposed a man may be to be selfish in other exercises, if he be a converted man he will be liberal when he prays. It is the instinct of a regenerated soul to rise above self, and to lay itself out in good to others. We should study to give free course to this instinct. It is from God, and its end is to bear all humanity back to his bosom. To its culture we are bound by the spirit of religion, by the precepts of the gospel, by our mutual weakness, and capacity to promote strength by union, by our hopes of the progress and perfection of humanity, and by our anticipations of resting with God eternally.

However we may fortify ourselves, and seek to be independent, there will come occasions in every human life when the soul will confess her need of brotherly sympathy. It is one of the social statutes, and cannot be set aside. Every man that lives, that is one of the vast human brotherhood called society, can give help somewhere and to some one; and there is not one that lives but can be made happier and better by receiving help. No man, then, can live selfishly, can neglect to work for the good of his brethren in humanity, without doing detriment

to his own happiness. He is identified with that brotherhood so closely that whatever of good or of evil comes to it in its aggregate comes to him in his integral relation to it; so that, by the force of this social law, the life of every man returns to him in blessings or curses, just as he lives savingly or ruinously.

As you toil for others, my brethren, bear in mind that in blessing them, you are indirectly blessing yourself: that every impulse you add to the march of humanity is an impulse given to yourself; and that in whatever of good your race may make advances under the sanctified employment of the social principle, you become a participant in that good, and that you are therefore personally interested in every movement that contemplates the virtue, intelligence, and happiness of mankind.

This is a great lesson. It is one which neither the world nor the Church has learned by heart. It is a lesson which, when it has been universally mastered, and mankind everywhere learn to act on it, will find the two hemispheres of our globe resting under the splendors of the old German "Foreworld." It is one of universal brotherhood, of catholic affection, embracing all conditions of humanity, all races of men, and all zones of the world, in one fraternity. It is a lesson the secret whereof is, that every man, no matter what the quality of his raiment, the culture of his mind, or the amount of his fortune, nor how sunk in degradation or blackened by crime, is my brother: that

every woman, be she ever so dead to virtue, and scorned by her less dishonored sisterhood, and lost even to shame, is my sister: that these, though polluted by foulest sins, and having wandered until they topple on the very verge of hell: that these, nearly damned as they may be, having been formed by the same hand that made us, having been bought by the same blood that redeemed us, and going with us, and through similar conflicts, to the one judgment-seat: that these all, no matter how low or vile, are your brothers and sisters—not to be your companions and the friends of your children, but your brothers and sisters to raise from the ruins in which you behold them, and to lead onward, until they have regained strength to walk alone. These are our kindred in humanity, who have fallen from their proud estate, and that, too, it may be, under the pressure of influences which we, with all our conscious strength, might not have withstood.

What is the work of religion in this field? I ask the question under a tide of feeling which you may not share; but if your eyes had looked on what mine have beheld—had your hearts melted at the sight, as did mine, and if your faith, like mine, had been forced, at sight of the sin on the one hand, and an inactive Church on the other, to cry out despairingly, “How long, O Lord! how long!” then would the question come home to you, like the trumpet of judgment, summoning to duty. The fields of vice are wide open before the eye of Chris-

tendom. Thousands have perished, and are lost for ever: thousands more are fast passing beyond our reach. They are our brothers, our sisters—not by blood, but by the bond of humanity. Many of them have fallen so low as that only hell could prove a lower deep; yet they live, and might be saved, if there were but brave hearts to feel and strong arms to help. O brethren, brethren! as you look on these conquered children of temptation, these fettered slaves of vice, be the vice ever so damning, instead of withholding your sympathy, open wide your hearts, and let the stream of pity flow forth; for we are never so near Divine as when full of compassion. As you thank God—and thank him you should—that he has either preserved you from temptation or made you strong to resist it, look not coldly, neither speak unkindly, to your fallen brother or sister, who once rejoiced in an innocence equal to yours—an innocence, too, from which many were led step by step, and to which they now turn with heart-breaking agony. Go to them, in their moments of yearning for the return of

“Joys they once tasted,
Now vanished and gone,”

and speak some word of kindness, born near your heart. It may prove the seed-grain of a harvest of immortal good; and if, as you touch some cord of the olden time that may chance to bring back a father's prayers and a mother's tears, the poor child

of folly weeps over these beautiful memories of childhood, these vanished dreams of youth, O then take the prodigal by the hand and bid him walk by your side! If he falter in his weakness, or if she sink, discouraged and despairing, bid them lean upon your strength: tell them of an all-conquering One, who will fight their battles, and crown them with victory: tell them of the band of immortals at God's right hand, who went up through tribulations, and are now happy: O, tell them of the soul's coming coronation and the high festival of that day, in which, if victorious, they may join: do this, and you may prove instrumental in saving souls from death, and shine for ever as stars in the firmament!

Brethren, I would rather have the recollection of a sincere endeavor to save such a soul, no matter how unsuccessful, than wear a diadem inlaid with jewels from the mountains and gems from the sea!

When will the Church throw herself in the van of the noble army who, like Jesus, go about doing good, and in imitation of him go everywhere in search of vice, not waiting for such as have ostracized themselves to come to the gospel-feast, but going abroad in search of them, invading the highways of fashionable vice, and pushing their way into the hedges and ditches of foulest degradation, and compelling, by an overpowering zeal and a Christlike kindness, the outcast to come in? When will we, who profess to have a commission to call "not the righteous, but sinners to repentance,"

enter upon our work with a love that will prove forgetful of self—a pity that will weep when pious hypocrisy sneers—a sympathy that will stoop to bind up the wounds that bleed in the body of gashed and prostrate infamy, while virtuous pharisaism passes on the other side; and with a compassion that, forgetting the sin, will, like Jesus, seek the sinner, and rest not until we see him sitting at the feet of our Master, clothed, and in his right mind?

To this we are all called. It is the work of the Lord, and should engage the attention of his people everywhere, and at all times.

Our system of benevolent operation has become stereotyped. We have our mission-fields at home and abroad, by which is meant our plans for carrying the gospel to the negro in the cotton-fields and the pagan amid his idols. We have our societies for circulating the Holy Scriptures, and our tract enterprise, which contemplates the distribution of a sanctified literature throughout the land. These are all noble blossomings, and promise much fruit. We rejoice in them. We labor for their success, and invoke the liberality of the Church in their behalf; yet we think it among the possible things that these, and like magnificent enterprises, may engross the eye of Christendom so that the “Greeks that are at our very doors” may not be seen. And it is because of this apprehension that we have this day directed your gaze to the wants of our common humanity that meet us in all our cities

and populous towns: to the sins that well-dressed and decent godliness is too apt to overlook and esteem as beyond the pale of its labors; and to those darker vices from which a feeble faith would shrink and a saintly hypocrisy recoil.

We have arrayed these before you because they cry aloud for interposition, and are not heeded with a zeal commensurate with the real agony of the cry.

These fields of humanity are before you for tillage. There is work for you at home and abroad. The bodies and souls of men are to be looked after. Some are ragged and pale with disease; others are old and destitute, bent with years and furrowed by time. Some are without parents, and others in widowhood. To these all you may prove a benediction.

O! if you would be happy: if you would ascend to the true dignity of your nature: if you would make that nature a vernal garden where springs of gladness gush forth and flowers of peace bloom—then give yourselves up to the work of the Lord; and if you would make perpetual the flowing fountains and the bright blossoms of that garden-place, see to it that the good deed of yesterday does not content you to-day, but so live as that each returning evening may find you with the memory of kind words spoken and gentle charities rendered that day to some one of that great brotherhood to which you are bound by the law of your being and the spirit of your religion.

You have no charter to be idle. God's command is, *work*. Whether he speak in his word, or in his works, the command is, *work*. Which way you look, you see examples of obedience to this command. Be not an anomaly, then. Let not the lily nestling on the mountain-side, nor the rose hanging on its frail stem in your garden walk, reproach you. Suffer not the ever-moving stars, as they flame along their azure paths, to rebuke you for inaction. Learn from the great, busy workshop of Nature, the lesson of work. Let

“The buds of spring, those beautiful harbingers
Of sunny skies and cloudless times,”

as they come forth in their appointed season, promising an inheritance of golden fruits, pour into your ears instructive evangels. Let the breath of summer,

“As from the morning's dewy flowers it comes,
Full of their fragrance,”

ripening the harvests, and kissing up the poison of stagnant pools, teach you of duty. Let autumn, with its crimson woods, its gathered grain, its solemn pomp and pageant; let winter, with its cold and storm, and mantling of ice—the season when

“The dead leaves strew the forest-walk,
And withered lie the pale wild-flowers;
The frost hangs blackening on the stalk,
And dew-drops fall in frozen showers;”

let all these seasons, which, like the oratorios of the

great old masters, blend the beautiful and sad, the glad and mournful, in their one strain of fourfold parts, be your teachers. Their call is to work, for they are always at their appointed tasks. Go then, if you would be content with life, and enjoy nature; and under their direction, and in obedience to that higher voice that comes to you from revelation, toil for God and humanity.

“O what a glory doth this world put on
 For him who with a fervent heart goes forth
 Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
 On duties well performed, and days well spent!
 For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
 Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.
 He shall so have the solemn hymn that Death
 Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
 To his long resting-place without a tear.”

3. *But we should not only work, but abound in work.*

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord:” that is, we must enlist our hearts in it. It must be a work of love as well as duty; a work to which we go, not as the slave, scourged to his toil, but as those who give themselves up to pleasant tasks.

To do this, our labor must proceed from a belief that it is duty. This supposes and requires a thorough acquaintance with that book that instructs in duty. If a man, receiving the word of God as his directory, gives himself to a diligent study of it, as to what it requires at his hands, and becomes convinced that he is held responsible for the manner in which he meets its requisitions, he will enter with far more heartiness upon the work of the

Lord, than if impelled by impulse. The field of his labor will not be bounded by the circle of his acquaintances, or the Church to which he belongs. It will be the field of humanity. Wherever there is a human being to bless, a sorrowing heart to comfort, or an erring spirit to guide, there will be found his field of action. His views of duty will be clear and comprehensive, and his work decided, constant, and unwavering. Neither discouragement nor opposition will daunt him. If his tasks comprise duty, it is enough. That determined, he goes to work; and although it may be on a mountain of granite, and his implement only a pickaxe, if it is the best to be had, he toils on, plying right vigorous blows, knowing that his labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

Brethren, "abound" in this work. Whatever you attempt, whether individual duty, or toil for humanity, give your heart to it. O be determined, uncompromising in your efforts to resist sin, to conquer self, to put off the bonds of corruption, to break your prison chains, to throw wide your dungeon doors, and to come forth, disenthralled, free from all sin. Trim your lamps, and keep an ample supply of grace against the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him," falls upon your startled ear. Train your young pinions for the final flight against the falling of the tabernacle, and the soul's liberation. O make the salvation of that soul the central orb in the firmament of action, eclipsing all other lights, or rather

imparting radiance, and giving harmony, as they move on in order and beauty. Be duty the centre around which all else revolves. Suffer not interest, or policy, ambition or pleasure, to lead you. Be men and women of principle. Make the pure gospel the basis of your toil. Love to God and man are the heart-throbs of that system. Ye are the followers of Christ, and as he did so must you, as you carry on his work; and O what an example has been placed before you! Love the purest, benevolence the widest, zeal the warmest, and energy the most untiring and enduring—these were the thick-clustering and far-shining orbs that girdled him, as he moved simply, yet in majesty like the sun, among men; and these, if ye are his followers, should flame along your paths, as ye go through the world.

4. *The text lays on us the injunction, not only to abound, but always to abound in the work of the Lord.*

And here we turn to Nature again for instruction. She speaks to us from her beautiful heights, and tells us to work on, and work ever. She pauses not in her tasks, but from year to year, and age to age, works on, and works ever. I turn to her with an infinite joy when weary with fruitless toil, and disheartened from want of success. In such hours her teachings rebuke my complaining spirit, and give strength to my languishing faith. I go forth and commune with her majesty; and her woods with their sylvan garniture; her waters, from the babbling brook to the deep sea and its musical

roar; her invisible winds, from the sweet southern breeze wandering o'er beds of violets, "stealing and giving odor," to the waltzing tempest, dancing with giant fury along the heavens, are so many incentives to "always abound" in the work which God has assigned me. The stars that walk their paths of glory, and have, since time began, bade me always work. I come, from beneath their light, a wiser man. If these work on, and work ever, may not I? May not you? May not all? O my brother, faint not, neither despair. Work where the Master has placed you, however hard the task. What though the desert be dreary, and the sky above heated and glowing? In that desert are bubbling fountains, and above that sky is a home more beautiful than the isles of the evening land. What though the mountain crags bleed your feet in your homeward march? The green valley, where your kindred wait and watch for your coming, lies beyond those mountain heights. Up, then, my brother, and on! Home and rest await thee when thy work is done. Until then thou art immortal here; and beyond that, infinity shall be thy home, and eternity thy lifetime!

DISCOURSE VIII.

Future Compensation of the Christian Worker.

FUTURE COMPENSATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORKER.

“Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”—1 COR. xv. 58.

ONE of the most comforting features of the gospel is the connection it reveals between the life that is, and the life that is to come. It teaches us to consider time and its duties as having certain relation to eternity and its awards; to associate toil here with repose there—labor in this life with rest in the life to come. In this is seen an element of adaptiveness to the present condition of the subjects of the gospel. The good are surrounded here with manifold causes of discouragement. The work which, because of their relation to God and man, is a part of their life-heritage, meets with opposition. Their own hearts, either from sluggishness or selfishness, are averse to it, while the world does no little in the way of impeding their labor. The good God, then, by connecting with this scene of toil another state, where righteous retribution is to

be rendered; where the soul is to subsist on food for which it now struggles, and wear laurels which in this time of conflict it contends for: by doing this, we say, the Father has caused the present time, with all its toil, and opposition, and discouragement, to wear an entirely new aspect. As we contemplate time in this light, the affections instinctively turn to the future, where the conflicts of the present are to be forgotten amid the fulness of our recompense.

In this way there is cast upon this labor-period, wherein so many noble souls are struggling to rise up into a better life, a charm that robs it of hardness. It enables a man to engage in duties from which he would otherwise shrink with dread and apprehensions of failure, with a feeling of resignation and even of joy. He finds it an easy thing then to do the work of the Lord, to abound in that work, knowing that be it ever so laborious in itself, and so crowded with worldly suffering, it is to be succeeded by an adequate recompense, and a glory that is to be everlasting.

The apostle had been well taught in the nature of the Christian system, and it was under this view of it that he so confidently urged upon the Church at Corinth, and through them on all consecrated souls, the necessity of steadfastness in their confidence in that system, and the duty of continuing to abound in the work of Him who was its author; adding for their encouragement the words of the text, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is

not in vain in the Lord:" that is, seeing that your compensation is sure beyond all doubt, and that of this you have abundant knowledge, be not moved from your confidence in God's word by the unbelief of your rebellious minds, or the wild questionings of infidels; neither let fear nor any thing else deter you from the work of your Master; but toil on, always abounding in that work until it closes, and you are called up to receive your reward.

The theme, this morning, my brethren, is a pleasant one, and I pray God to make it abound in comfort to you, even as its contemplation in the seclusions of his study has given consolation and encouragement to your speaker. It is the Future Compensation of the Christian Worker.

In seeking to unfold it to your profit, we will,

I. FIRST EXPLAIN WHAT WE MEAN BY THE FUTURE COMPENSATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORKER; and,

II. THEN DWELL ON SOME OF THE FEATURES OF THAT COMPENSATION.

We do not mean to indicate by the term compensation that the Christian worker can merit any recompense at the hand of God for the good he may do in the Divine service. There may be relative merit in what he does, but there can be no such thing as absolute merit in any created intelligence. The Christian worker is to be rewarded, but not in the sense usually attached to that term. Its signification, as ordinarily used, is the reception of good on the ground of deservedness. This con-

struction is inadmissible when applied to the good received by the Christian, either in this life or the life to come; because it would imply an independent ability on his part to attain to a personal worth, which, because of some antecedent indebtedness of God, or some liability to incur such indebtedness, must be rewarded. It would place God, the Creator, either originally or by some inherent possibility, under absolute obligation or debt to man the creature, which is in plain antagonism to the nature, character, and relations of the parties as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

It is true the term "reward" is used in the Scriptures, but not, as we conceive, in the ordinary sense in which men speak of it. In the following passages it is employed: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your *reward* in heaven." "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's *reward*; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's *reward*; and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in nowise lose his *reward*." "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your *reward* shall be great, and ye shall be called the children of the Highest." "Every man shall receive his own *reward*." "If any man's work abide, he shall receive a *reward*." "Let no man beguile you of your *reward*." "Thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall *reward* thee openly." "Behold I

come quickly, and my *reward* is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

These are the scriptures in which the doctrine of recompense is taught, and in which the term *reward* is used to indicate it. They may seem to the superficial readers of the Bible to indicate that absolute merit in the creature is the basis on which good is to be meted to him; yet, from the total opposition to this doctrine found everywhere in the word of God, and the repugnancy of reason and our own feelings to it, it must be that the term used in setting forth the fact that the good are to meet with favor from God must have some other interpretation than the one given in its use among human affairs.

The righteous are to be rewarded. No truth in God's word stands out with more distinctness than this, yet it is to be a reward of grace, and not of debt. This, then, is our position, that the compensation promised the Christian worker has its origin, not in any absolute personal worth in him, but in the favor of his great benefactor.

God never can become a debtor to man. He has the highest and most indisputable claim on his creatures for constant and perfect service; and were any creature to be found in the world, or heard of in the past ages, who had rendered such service, even he would only have met and performed that which in itself, and without respect to *reward*, was a debt. Where, then, seeing that none in all the family of Adam have ever given God a

service that was perfect, are we to look for the foundation of the papal dogma as to works of supererogation? and who now can presume to hand in his claim upon God for eternal good, on the plea that his meritorious life in and of itself demands it at the hand of the Judge? Ah! what humility ought we poor defaulters in duty to feel, as we survey the unprofitable past, and with what gratitude should we remember the grace of God in providing for us our heritage of untold good!

But some will ask, Since you discard human merit as the basis of compensation, in what, then, does it consist? We will endeavor to show you.

While it is impossible for God, antecedently, to become our debtor, it is true that he can, in the plenitude of his grace, enter into covenants with his creatures, and in these voluntarily bind himself to fulfil such engagements and to perform such promises as, in the riches of his grace, he may make for the happiness of his subjects. To all this, we hold he is inclined by the inherent goodness of his nature, and by his amazing love; while his power makes certain his ability to do whatever he voluntarily promises.

In the infinitude of his regard for us, he has covenanted to bestow good on those who do good; to recompense such as enter heartily upon the work assigned them in his word and in the order of his providence, and who continue in well-doing until summoned from the field of toil to the heaven of rest.

All this, be it remembered, is attributable to his gracious commiseration of our condition, and leaves us ground for nothing but gratitude. It flows from a disposition to make his creatures happy, and lays on them an obligation to put forth all their energies in the work of doing whatsoever the gracious covenant requires from them. It binds them with the strong chain of love, and makes the performance of duty not only the instinct of interest but the dictate of gratitude. To encourage them in their toil, he has bound himself by two immutable things in which it is impossible for him to lie, his covenant and promises, to bestow on all who do the required work a future compensation—a compensation not deserved in the sense of absolute merit, but which is promised as a gracious reward for their perseverance in doing and suffering his will.

This reward no man can claim as his due, on the principle of commutative justice, as we think can be shown, if you will give thoughtful attention.

We think it demonstrable that the best works of a sinful creature must, of necessity, be imperfect; that selfishness, or pride, or vanity, or some one of the many sinful ingredients of human nature, will be found mixed in greater or less abundance with every action or performance of life. To be convinced of this, recur honestly to your own experience. Examine with candor your past deeds of kindness, and see if among them all you can find one that was absolutely and purely disinterested. The task, we think,

would be difficult, such is the selfishness of human nature under its best training. Now, these imperfections involve us in guilt; this guilt makes pardon or punishment inevitable: if the former be sought and obtained, we at once become debtors to God, and having nothing by which to cancel the claim, we are at once reduced to bankruptcy. One such instance as we have supposed, renders impossible the liquidation of our debts on the commutative principle; and when we remember the repeated and aggravated instances with which our past lives abound, we can but see how impossible it is that we should hope to exchange our excess of good, as an equivalent, for God's pardon of the wrong we have done.

Furthermore, brethren, when we do what is good, it is in reliance on God for ability, which ability springs from his renewing and sanctifying grace; "so that, while in one sense good works are our deeds, they are, in another, his donations."

These reflections, we think, cannot fail to convince you that the reward bestowed on the good man does not proceed from commutative justice, but springs from the free and unmerited grace of God.

But why then is it called a reward, if it is not founded on a principle denominated equity in human transactions? We answer that it is very properly called a recompense, first, because it sustains to obedience and perseverance the relation of motive in the sense of factorship. It is promised in this way as a means of encouragement, as an

incentive to stimulate our industry, and for the purpose of lending us aid amid the hindrances that beset the path of Christian duty. It is called a reward, also, because it is to be the visible evidence in a coming day that we have been approved of God. In this way compensation has been associated with obedience, both as a motive, intended to stimulate, and as a result, which, in the arrangement of God, necessarily follows obedience; and therefore, when the righteous man is rewarded in heaven, his reward will serve as the external and visible sign that he has been faithfully obedient in this life; that his conduct in this state has then and there received the seal of Divine approval. Hence says Paul to the Thessalonians, "We are bound to thank God always for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

We conclude, then, from these brief arguments, desultorily presented, that the compensation promised the Christian, and to which the truth of God is pledged, is all of grace; that its tendency should be to humble us all, under a sense of our dependence; and to inspire within our hearts the most unbounded gratitude to Him who, in the magnitude

of his goodness and love, has promised eternal salvation to those who obey him, and to them alone.

II. HAVING OFFERED THIS EXPLANATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF COMPENSATION, AS STATED IN THE SCRIPTURES, WE PROCEED NEXT TO NOTICE, WITH SPECIALTY, SOME OF ITS PROMINENT FEATURES.

It is necessary, brethren, not only that we entertain correct opinions of the basis on which rewards are to be given, but that we inform ourselves as to the circumstances that are to mark their bestowal. These are manifold, and all have more or less interest, yet we shall only call your attention to some of the more prominent of them at this time.

1. *And the first that we shall notice is the fact that our compensation is, for the most part, future.*

It is true, my brethren, that every good deed done upon the earth brings an immediate recompense to the doer, in the way of inward satisfaction. And it is true, also, that the Christian worker is often permitted to see a harvest of good springing up from the sowing of right seed by his industrious hand. While this is true, it is matter of painful experience, with most persons, that much of their toil seems lost. They see no fruit, after long and faithful exertions to do good, and their only consolation is that there is a future day of recompense. But for this hope, many whose lives have been passed in unresting effort, and yet without visible success, would have abandoned the field in despair; would have stood trembling and faltering at the base of many an uplifted and frowning mountain,

over which they have long since passed. They had the word of God, however, and in that word was the registered promise that bread cast upon the waters should be gathered; that faithfulness unto death would bring a crown of life; and that for those who suffered in this world for righteousness' sake, there were great rewards in heaven. These promises they read amid all their fruitless toil. They found them exceeding great and precious, and sufficient, too, to renerve the arm which else had been powerless, and make heroical the heart which but for them had faltered.

2. *Another feature in this recompense is, that it is to be not according to the grandeur of our work, and the success of our exertions, but in proportion to the singleness of our aims and the earnestness wherewith we have toiled.*

There is an essential difference between those that sow sparingly and those that sow bountifully, and this difference is not to be seen in its entire manifestation until the day of recompense. It will be seen, not in the abstract quantity of good obtained or done, but in the motive with which we will have labored, and the honesty of our efforts.

Some persons are, by constitution, more disposed to personal goodness than others. They have amiable tempers, religious tendencies, and kind dispositions. These qualities seem to belong to their nature. They are surrounded, perhaps, in the order of providence, with means favorable to usefulness, such as position, family, wealth, influence, etc.

There are other persons with more of evil in

their natures. Either by constitution or from education, they seem to have inherited stronger propensities, fiercer passions, appetites more difficult to restrain, and a selfishness that turns them away from every good word and work—persons, in short, more entirely under the dominion of evil than others, and that, too, by virtue of circumstances not of their own producing, and, in some sort, beyond their control.

In addition to these disabilities, or, it may be, separate from them, as is often true, is a want of means to get and do good on an enlarged and attractive scale. They are without much intellectual culture; shut out from the means of grace in a great measure; confined within doors by sickness; and limited by poverty in resources for giving aid to the destitute.

In the providence of God, and by no fault of their own, they may be without influence—may not be known beyond the door of their own cottage—may live for years utter strangers in our busy marts of trade, and, therefore, circumscribed as to their field of operations.

Now, we believe that a just God will have respect to these differences in organization and position in the day of compensation. It will then be seen that while some have attained to great goodness, eminent piety, and extended usefulness, and have been applauded by the world, others, with attainments, in point of measure, far inferior, and success much more limited, as to appearance, will receive an equal

and perhaps a greater reward. It will be disclosed then how that these, although they may not have gone as far as others, have struggled with more of intense earnestness, to get as far as they did, than many who with their greater speed outstripped them. It will be seen that the distance, though less, had more of roughness, and they less of strength to travel; and that while others may, in the esteem of man, who judges by externals, have accomplished more in the world's harvest field, they will have done the more work, and, therefore, be entitled to the larger compensation.

This reflection is full of encouragement to the weak, and should teach the strong a lesson of charity.

There are many good people with constitutional infirmities, such as tempers of terrible strength, passions of despotic power, and frailties with scarcely one natural support. These may be struggling with a more awful agony, and yet with far less of victory, than others who have neither these infirmities of organization, nor obstacles in the form of circumstances, to contend with. And yet, brethren, how little of sympathy do these receive from such as may be strangers to the fierce conflicts through which they pass!

The position of a pastor, if he be a man who is approachable, and whose sympathy and counsel may be relied on, often brings him in communication with persons of this class—men who, before

conversion, had given themselves up to the practice of evil in some form, and who, after they turned their steps to God's testimonies, had to contend with the long dominant evil as with a tyrant: who had to battle with the powerful force of long-indulged habit: to wrestle with the grim shadow of sin after the substance had been yielded; and whose lives passed in alternations of falling and rising. Intercourse of this kind has done much toward exciting our pity for those who, whatever may be their failures, give evidence of a continued effort to do duty. We would, therefore, encourage such, if here to-day, by reminding them that One is to judge them who knows their feeble frame, who is acquainted with their struggles, with the wild agony with which they are striving for victory. He regards you not as man does, but with a perfect knowledge of what you are, with a sympathy in view of the peculiarities of your condition, and will mete out a compensation on the principle of justice; that is, in proportion to the honest efforts you make to do his will.

Struggle on, then! Do not despair! You have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of your infirmities, but one who in all points was tempted as you are. Strive for that spotlessness of which he has set you so noble an example, remembering the cheering assurance that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," and bearing in mind that while you can approach the

throne of grace, and find mercy for the past, you may draw strength from the same source to help you in all future times of need.

But we are told by some that after all their efforts to do good in their families, in their community, and in the world, they have failed: that their children are still wanderers from God, the people still wicked, and the world, so far as they can see, no better for all that they have done. What of all this, while you have the consolation to know that your reward is not to be measured by actual success, but by the efforts you make to be successful? Your want of success may be attributable to those for whom you labor, or to others who should have coöperated with you, but have not, or to those who have opposed you, and who have by their opposition neutralized your efforts—efforts, too, which had they not been hindered would have resulted in good. Does the guilt of failures like these rest with you? Even men would not charge it on you, much less a just God. Go on then and do your duty; for your labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

You are responsible only for the motive prompting to toil, and for your diligence while toiling. Look well to these, and you have nothing to fear. Be certain that you are doing your part, and doing it so as to glorify God. Then your compensation, however unsuccessful your efforts, will be the same as though all had prospered according to your largest desire. Duty is yours: the result is in the

hands of the Lord. You can give no more commanding proof of your confidence in God than to be able to sing:

“Although the vine its fruit deny,
Although the olive yield no oil;
The withering fig trees droop and die,
The fields elude the tiller’s toil:
Although my gifts and comforts lost,
My blooming hopes cut off I see,
Yet will I in my Saviour trust,
And glory that he died for me.”

We think it possible, brethren, that the Father sometimes hides our success that we may have opportunity for proving our faith. As we stand at the beginning, he hides the issue, and the only voice we hear is his, saying, “Go forward!” It should satisfy us that it is his voice, and that, howsoever darkened may be our path of duty, we can bear with us his assurance that “our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.” It was so with Abraham when God said to him, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Thus has it been with many since then, and perhaps with some of you.

You are called to sacrifices in duty that try your faith. Reason is baffled: the counsel of the wise fails to show you the end, and you have nothing on which to rest your heart but the conviction that it is God’s will, and therefore best.

O brethren! brethren! falter not in moments like these! Do your duty, though the heavens fall. Acquit yourselves nobly in the work assigned you; and although you may not know why it was required, nor given to see it budding into fruitage, the reward will be given. The day of recompense, when it comes, will be both honoring to your faith and satisfying to your soul. Ah! that soul may have wandered in valleys of strange darkness—may have buffeted with tumults that came near overwhelming it—may have sat down amid perplexities, and, like a lost child, sobbed out its cries to the Father, and that, too, through the cold and stormful night of doubt. Then these will be over. These tumults will have been escaped. You will have emerged from that valley of weeping and that night of darkness, and, like the child when found and borne back to the homestead from which it wandered, will be folded upon the Father's bosom, to rest in quietness and assurance for ever!

But others tell us that they are discouraged. They say, "We are poor, unlearned, and without influence; we can do no good, and cannot therefore expect a reward. We are sorry that it is so; we weep over it, for we yearn to be useful; if we had only the talents—the means, we would consecrate all to God, and secure a recompense. As it is, though, we must be satisfied to be 'little and unknown' here, and expect but little in the world to come."

Brethren, learn better your duty and your reward.

If, now, you have rightly outlined your condition in life, God does not require of you as you seem to imagine. He holds you bound, even as he does all, to do your duty in the sphere of life which you in the arrangements of his providence may fill, and if you meet this demand, you have nothing to fear: an angel could do no more; and although in abstract quantity the increase of your one talent may not equal that of your more liberally endowed brother, it will fill the requisition of Heaven if the balance-sheet, when struck, shows that duty has been done, and therefore secure for you in the kingdom of our God as noble a guerdon as can be gained by an archangel.

The conditions of human life are of necessity various. They are the appointment of God; and his justice claims a final rendering according to the ability given to fill these different conditions. In some of these he bestows one talent; it is all that is necessary. In another, two; in another, three; and in some five. If the steward of one talent render up two at the final auditing, will he not have done as nobly as he who, having received five, comes up with ten? He may not equal his fellow-laborer in the aggregate presented, but will in the principle involved. We conclude, then, that the rewards of the future are not to be measured by the greatness of instrumentalities employed, or the splendor of success attending human labor, but by the fidelity with which each instrument, be his sphere high or low, shall have done his work. This is God's order,

however different man's may be, and holds out to the most obscure Christian as lofty a place among the glorified as can be attained by the most renowned.

The error we are trying to induce you to put away has defeated many a good Christian of much happiness, and is retarding the spread of the gospel among the nations.

A sanctified ambition will always desire something higher and nobler than is possessed. Christian men and women who have this ambition, cast their eyes upward, where ascended prophets, and martyrs, and confessors, and the eminent dead of all ages are blended in one glorious throng, and as they recall the circumstances under which these went up—circumstances different from those by which they are surrounded—they become disheartened, and turn away from the hope of one day being enthroned in their midst. They quench in this way the kindled fires of a noble emulation, and giving themselves up to feeble endeavors, are found creeping toward the city, content if only they at last may enter in.

We meet with others who occupy retired positions in the Church and State, and who think that if they only stood in the pulpit, qualified to lead the listening assembly beside the Mountain of Terror, or the Hill of Suffering, or up the Beautiful Heights along which the angels travel; or if they were prominent as citizens, or professional men, or as women of influence and means, instead of having to wield the hammer, or drive the plane, or open the furrow, or

stand behind the counter, or draw the needle, then they could hope for great reward ; but as it is, they will be satisfied if they can only pass life so as when it closes to enter into rest.

Ah ! my brethren, we know it will be happiness indeed if a poor tossed voyager should prove so fortunate as to drop his anchor in the port of glory, and that such a termination of the voyage will give food enough for eternal praise ; yet if there be a possibility of sharing more than an entrance into heaven, do not fail to seek it. Do not, in complaint at your position in life, keep down your soul, which in its aspirations yearns for the highest. Let it be superior to your condition. What though you do not stand in the pulpit, and may not be prominent in your community, nor have a broad influence in the world ? What though you are poor, and ignorant, and unknown ? Has not your condition been beyond your control ? Is it not of God's ordaining ? If so, suppose you do have to toil with your hands for the necessities of life : what of it ? Is poverty a shame ? labor a sin ? ignorance a crime ? Are there no duties to engage you in the sphere where you move ? Are there no voices crying to you from your own hearthstones ? Is the circle around which you are plodding your way in complaint perfected ? If not, go to work there, and although it may be a home of poverty, and you not known beyond the smoke of your habitation, labor there, and when you have completed the duties that lie nearest you, God will reveal to your willing soul still others, and with the

revelation give means to do them. On this plan you are to go on, extending your labor-circle until, having done your part, you will unite in singing "harvest home," and find that your labor has not been in vain.

The question is not *where* a man works, but *how*? It is unimportant, so far as reward is concerned, what position God may give you in the field, so you honor it. You may have wealth, wisdom, and fame; or you may have to toil with your hands until they are hard—to labor until the body is bent, the face tanned, the limbs stiffened, and the eye dimmed; yet the only question in the day of reward will be, "Did he do his duty where he was appointed?" It will not matter then whether the Christian worker was a philosopher in the laboratory of science, a student over his tomes, a merchant at his desk, a blacksmith at his forge, a professional man in his office, or a poor widow sitting by her midnight taper as it burns dimly in her rude hovel, and wearing out her eyes in heroic efforts to clothe and educate her fatherless babes; no matter, we say, what he was, nor where found, so he was at work. His "labor shall not be in vain."

O complain not, then, at your condition, but work in that condition. We have become a generation of whimperers, sitting by the wayside begging the alms of pity, when we should be harnessing ourselves for the strife, and battling manfully for our reward.

I bless God that every living man, however poor,

or ignorant, or unknown, has it in his power so to abound in the work of the Lord as to find a compensation as full, as satisfying, and as eternal as that received by the author of my text ! When I hear the children of God in this day saying that the fathers of past centuries, who were men for their times, and whose names I revere, will have positions in glory so exalted as to leave no hope that we who now live shall ever stand by their side, I feel that in this they do undervalue their capabilities and cast a reproach on God. We can stand with them, if we will. They only did their duty, and we can do ours, and so be assigned a place among the valiant at God's right hand. I bless God that he has implanted in the soul of every enlightened Christian a principle, urging him as he beholds crowns of varied and dazzling splendor, thrones rising above thrones, principalities o'ersweeping principalities in their sublime order, to enter the contest and strive for the noblest, though unworthy of the poorest. This, brethren, we can all do—toil for the highest, even though our merit do not entitle us to the lowest. O let us seek for noble places—for stations of eminence, for diadems of surpassing lustre ; for with emulation like this our Father is well pleased. It is

——“The germ

From which all growth of nobleness proceeds ;”

and as these sublime longings and high aspirations are sent abroad by us to embody themselves in

forms of good here, preparatory to our enthronement there, let us remember, while toiling, that He whom we serve has seats of honor for his faithful, which even the first-born sons of light may not occupy.

3. *Another feature in this compensation is, that it is certain.*

“Forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain.”

We do not mean, when we say that this compensation is certain, that all who are now toiling for it will receive it. That is conditional, depending on our continuance in well-doing to the end. We mean, though, that however far we may miss receiving the reward, it is there, and may be shared. The word of God tells us that it is reserved in heaven for those that endure to the end, and we believe it. It is therefore certain. The justice and faithfulness of the Almighty are sureties for its certainty. In that covenant which he graciously and voluntarily entered into with us, he prescribes obedience on our part, and promises reward on his.

Now it is certain that he cannot promise beyond his ability to perform, for he is infinite in power; neither can any combination of effort, whether of men or of devils, defeat his purposes, or resist him in the accomplishment of his designs. Seeing, then, that he has solemnly covenanted to reward the good, every attribute of his infinite nature is pledged to that covenant.

The only concern is as to myself; I have none as

to him. He is faithful, and will not suffer me to labor in vain. Just as certain as we work with right motives, with becoming earnestness, and continued exertion, ever relying on Him who has promised his presence alway, even unto the end of the world, just so certain will our labor bring its recompense; for the promise is, that "it shall not be in vain in the Lord."

The only thing necessary, then, to put my doubts to silence, is a firm persuasion of the truth and faithfulness of God. Let me be satisfied of this, and my fears are gone. I can look away from this Doubting Castle to the House Beautiful of which the old Baptist dreamer wrote, and almost hear, as he did, "the song of birds from that upper chamber which opens toward the sun-rising," and drink in the glad welcome of the shining ones, as they come to conduct me through the gate into the city.

Ours, brethren, is no doubtful enterprise. In no other pursuit is there such certainty of success. Men toil for wealth, and seek fame, and plunge into the wild revel of sensual pleasure, that they may be happy; but how uncertain are all these, even did they satisfy! Who ever found his acquired treasures sufficient to compensate him for the toil and sacrifice they cost? When did the child of unsanctified ambition feel, as he stood upon the summit of his aspirations, that the reward repaid him for his anxiety, his maltreatment of conscience, and his probable loss of honor? What votary of pleasure was ever satisfied by quaffing at

her sparkling fountains? Thousands who have rushed thither to drink, in madness and in greed, have turned away, to die in disappointment and despair.

There are no uncertainties in our enterprise, brethren. There are no rivals seeking to appropriate our due to themselves; for our Father has enough for all his children, and only to children is it given. There are no fluctuations by which it can waste away, for it is reserved in heaven, and hid with Christ, for us. We have cause to look only to ourselves; all else is as unfailing as God himself.

“Ah!” says one, “that is enough. I have so many fears that, after all, I shall fail of heaven. My heart is deceitful. My enemies are crafty. My life is so far below my ideal that I sometimes sit down and weep under the fear that I shall come short of my reward.”

These fears we have heard from you in the classroom, and around your firesides. There are moments, perhaps, when all have them. Indeed, we ought to fear. We are exhorted to it, as the principle under conduct of which we are to pass our time of sojourn here. “Be not high-minded,” says the apostle, “but fear.” Ah yes, fear becomes us. The grain is not yet garnered, and who knows what ravages may waste the hopeful harvest! The voyage is not ended, and there are stormy seas to encounter yet. We are not at home by many a day of weary travel, and who of us is confident that

he will not faint as he climbs the intervening mountain, nor grow dizzy as he passes the frightful precipice?

In circumstances like these we should fear ourselves, but not our Father. Our conscious weakness, and constant exposedness, should drive us to him, and make us more reliant on his strength, in our seasons of weakness. O never lose sight of the truth, that whatever of uncertainty there may be here, and as to ourselves, a sure and satisfying heaven invites us to come; that there is a garner for the grain, a port for the vessel, a home for the exile. Whether we will reach it I know not; but it is there. If we fail, the fault will be our own. God has laid contribution on all the possibilities of his nature for aid; and if, after all, we prove faithless to him, and to ourselves, the reward will be lost to us for ever; but if true, your crown is ready for your wearing. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." What encouragement this to labor! and how many thousands has it upborne amid toil and want of success!

It is this that sustains the preacher, as in weariness of body and mind he throws his thoughts together, with a view to their Sabbath utterance. He knows that with many who listen, they will be but as the idle wind, gone with the hour in which they were heard. He knows, though, that his

reward will be in proportion to his toil; and that, although no good may spring from all his mental and moral toil, yet having done his work with a single eye, it will not go unrewarded.

Having drawn consolation from reflections like these, I would offer them to you, brethren, that ye, too, may look hopefully to your reward. O! be about the Master's business! Let no day deepen into night, without some recorded deed of good in your favor. Let each to-morrow find you in advance of to-day in your homeward march. That march hastens to a termination. It will close in the night of death, as to the body, but of day to the soul. On that day our fellow-laborers are ever entering. The old in their decline, and the young with their locks wet with the dew of youth, are leaving us daily, and going to their reward. They have heard our vows to be faithful breathed into their ears, amid the parting strife, and they expect noble things of us all. My faith looks up, and beholds them bending down in loving expectation. Some of them were dear to us in life, and have left us the memory of their devotion. O blessed, immortal throng! we are following your footsteps! Some of us in sadness and in tears, yet we are coming! We know that we will not be parted long! that our release is not far distant! and that when we join you in your happy home, we, too, shall find that our labor has not been in vain.

DISCOURSE IX.

Victory over the World.

VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

“And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—1 JOHN v. 4.

THERE is much involved, my brethren, in a public profession of religion. He who makes it, draws thereby a line of distinction between the world and himself. He assumes ground different from that he once occupied, and avows himself the subject of principles at variance with those that influence such as live after the flesh. The two positions are antipodal—as wide apart as heaven and hell.

It is true, there may be, and often is, a partial proximity; yet this is possible only on the principle of mutual surrender. They who are of the world may observe a morality borrowed from the Bible, while the professed followers of Jesus may neglect much that legitimately belongs to their profession; and in this way—this mutual abandonment of their respective principles—they may come so nearly to-

gether as to baffle the closest observer in his efforts to distinguish them.

In their real features, though, there is no resemblance. Their spirit and practice, as determined by the word of God, are utterly antagonistic; and, therefore, between them there can be no concord without a sacrifice somewhere.

He, then, who claims to be a Christian, by that very claim, if he be true to his system, announces himself as being separated from the world, as having come out from among them, and as henceforth pledged to a life different from that which as a sinner he formerly led.

Now, then, we discover somewhat of the cause of that outward warfare in which every good man is involved. It is because of his devotion to right. His devotion calls forth the opposition of the evil. He at once engages in a contest in which one of the parties must suffer defeat.

To be a Christian, then, is to be a soldier—not a nominal subject, but one who, having enlisted in the service of God, stands prepared to fight his battles, and ever willing, too. For a man who by public profession of faith has declared himself on the Lord's side to live without conflict, is to give token that he is living out of the line of duty, and furnish ground for grave questioning as to the validity of his profession. We never find such a man inviolably adhering to the right in the face of strong public opinion. On the contrary, he is eminently politic, trimming his sails to the wind that

is most popular, and unwilling to jeopard his social position, or to sacrifice his interests, in his loyalty to Christian principle. These are not soldiers. They never fight. Only those who, taking the word of the Lord as their guide and interpreter, unflinchingly follow its directions, in despite of opposition or temporal loss, know any thing of active service. Their duty is defensive and aggressive, and if faithfully met, gives but little rest in this world, and no release. They have to fight, and fight always, until the Captain of salvation calls them from battle-fields below to rewards in heaven.

It is no small comfort, however, that the good man does not enter this contest single-handed. This would be to insure defeat, in view of the number, strength, and malignity of his enemies. The strength of the All-powerful goes with him in every engagement. In addition, he receives from the hand of his Leader a weapon tried and true. That weapon is faith; and by means of it, he can overcome all his enemies, and shout victory in the end. It not only serves him in the defences to which he is called, but forms a connecting link between him and his Leader. It binds them; and however feeble the soldier, if he but preserve unbroken this bond, there will always be so much of Divine might communicated as to make him victorious.

This doctrine of contest, and of victory by means of faith, is taught in our text. The verse going before it represents the Christian as a victor, as having overcome the world. The text then comes

in reäffirmingly, and as containing the explanation of so glorious a victory: "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The topic which we have thus indicated has been chosen in view of its appropriateness to the occasion. It is designed for those of you whose probation in the Church having expired have been adjudged worthy a place in our communion, and are here this morning to take on yourselves the vows of the Church.

This provision of our Church, which is one of its peculiarities, must commend itself to all who are made acquainted with its nature. It is called "probation," and consists in holding a trial, or test-relation to the Church, for the term of six months, during which term the probationer is to try the Church, and become acquainted with its doctrines, usages, spirit, etc., and the Church, on her part, is to test the probationer. If, at the end of this term, both parties are satisfied, the covenant is sealed, the pending contract is confirmed, and the probationer becomes a member of the Church. If, however, either party is dissatisfied, the relation of the probationer is quietly dissolved, and that, too, without any public action in the premises.

The Church thus becomes a nursing-mother to those who, many of them, although concerned as to their salvation, do not feel free to take upon themselves in perpetuity all the vows of religion, but who, unless there be some middle-ground for them to occupy, where they can try themselves,

and that, too, without being subject to annoyances from the world, are in danger of going back again. This feature of our Church offers such ground. He who takes his place on it is not regarded as having necessarily accomplished the inceptive work of his salvation. He is placed there that he may be separated from the world, and that while there he may give proof to himself and to others that he will bring no reproach on the cause of God, and also satisfy himself that he is willing to adopt the doctrines and general economy of that branch of the Church as his, and that, too, from personal examination into, and persuasion of, their merit.

This term of probation with you has expired; and your leaders having reported favorably of your devotion and zeal, and you having expressed a desire to have your heretofore conditional membership confirmed, we are together now to perform this solemn duty. I cannot suffer so important an event in connection with your Christian pilgrimage to pass without an endeavor to make it impressive and profitable to you and this congregation.

The step you are about taking in your Christian pilgrimage is a solemn one. You will be called on this day, in the presence of God and this multitude, to reëffirm your baptismal vows: to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow or be led by them," and that you will "obediently keep God's holy will and command-

ments, and walk in the same all the days of your lives." Will there be no conflict of soul, think you, in the fulfilment of these vows? We dare not deceive you. We tell you, in all candor, that while your religion will afford you comfort such as the world never can bestow, it will place you upon a battle-ground. If you would have the comfort, you will have to be more than an idle spectator while on the battle-ground. There will be brought forth against you all that subtlety can project, malice invent, or that persevering toil can accomplish. **YOU WILL HAVE TO FIGHT.** Be not discouraged, though. They that are for you are more and mightier than those engaged against you. You may be weak yourself—the weakest of all; yet for your help there is pledged all that is infinite in wisdom, tender in love, and powerful in grace. Above all, you have the promise of a principle, in the maintenance of which your overthrow becomes impossible. It is faith. In the exercise of this, your triumph becomes certain; for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

That you may go forth from this solemn service better prepared to "fight the good fight of faith," to "lay hold on eternal life," we will devote the hour to a more particular examination of this contest, and the principle by which you may become victorious.

The foe against which the Christian is to do battle, is called "the world." "And this is the

victory that overcometh the world.” In another place it is said of this foe, that it “lieth in wickedness,” or in the wicked one, under his influence. Seeing that this is so, believers are exhorted to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” on the ground that “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” You see from these passages that the world is held to be our foe, and that between it and the religion taught by our Lord and his apostles, there can be no union without sacrifice of principle. The term world, as it occurs in the text, and passages quoted, is used generically, and means evil of every kind, as we find it interfused in the world around us. This construction gives us a wide latitude for the counsel we would offer. We prefer, however, to use the term to-day as representing the associations and pursuits common to the worldly-minded, and as embracing those calamities that have the seeming of evil, and which are permitted to come to the good, as trials of their faith. This will be to restrict its meaning, so as that it will apply more directly to such conflicts as you may have to meet in your coming warfare.

There is much, my friends, in your individual associations with the world, as it lies around you, to endanger your piety.

In taking this position, we do not mean to come in conflict with the goodness of God, in placing us

under the force and influence of the social law. He has made us for society; and in this law of our nature we recognize the source of manifold enjoyments, as well as the means of accomplishing great good. Left alone, a man becomes comparatively helpless, and is miserable; but placed in communication with others, his power increases, and his nature expands. It is by social concentration that the dominion of humanity widens, embracing the earth, the sea, and the air. In the same way it is that the heart of the individual finds an outlet for its wondrous affections, and takes, in exchange, the sympathy and love of those to whom this social law has united him. With thankfulness we acknowledge our indebtedness to God for thus creating us; in making this social principle, and its relations, the means of progress, and the spring of much of the happiness we have in this life; and when we call on you to renounce the world, we do not mean that you are to retire into solitude, and, amid the fastings and vigils of ascetic life, make preparations for heaven. This would be to defeat the great end of social Christianity, which is to bring the good in contact with the evil, that the latter may be impressed with the superior virtue and excellence of goodness, and in this way be led back to God. He, then, who voluntarily abandons society, and buries himself in the seclusion of the cloister, hoping in this way to place himself beyond the influence of worldly fascinations, opposes the order of Heaven, and evinces a want of confidence in the promised

support of God. He places himself outside of the charter that guarantees Divine aid, and having done this, may expect other and perhaps fiercer encounters in his retirement, without any authority to draw on God for help.

While this is true, we are apprehensive that the views of many on the subject of association with the world are too latitudinarian. We are of opinion that the Christian idea of society is not sufficiently understood by Christian people, and that for want of an accurate view, and a just discrimination in this matter, many well-intentioned members of the Church suffer incalculable loss by their worldly associations. They have not prayerfully studied the Christian use of society; have not made an estimate of the good it may confer, or the evil to which it may lead; and for want of such study and estimate, are suffering society to control them, when in reality they should, by an uncompromising maintenance of principle in all their social connections, be leading society on toward the cross.

Whenever a Christian finds his relations with society tending to destroy that inward creative power in which his sacred personality consists, and in the exercise and right training of which he is to be ever unfolding his nature; or whenever society, failing to destroy that great power, still points out the course it takes, or supplies the forms into which it is to be cast, then is that Christian involved in untold danger, by virtue of his social connections;

and if he be not mindful unto incessant prayer and watching, he will find the social principle, so pregnant otherwise of good, a most fruitful source of evil to him.

The growth of religious virtue, my friends, is from within, we know; yet the influences coming upon it from without, contribute to its maturing, or act as hindrances, in a degree that would surprise one who had never watched the process. It is in this way that our social connections become great means of improvement, or obstacles of fearful magnitude, in the path of Christian life.

Now none will deny, that for a man's spiritual life to be growing daily, his mind must be preserved from corrupt tendencies, and his thoughts, which may be said to sustain a paternal relation to what he says, be kept free from impurity. To mix indiscriminately, and without caution, with the worldly, will so expose a Christian in these respects as to render it impossible that he should come forth without spot or wrinkle. He will often hear conversation which, although it may not be obscene, will be indelicate, and from which a chaste imagination will recoil. Unless on your guard, images of impurity will be forced on your mind, because of this exposedness, and these, having diminished in your estimation by the frequency of their recurrence, will at last wear a harmless appearance to you—yet all the more harmful therefor. This danger has its origin in a disposition to yield Christian ground when it is invaded, and it is pre-

cipitated by our not resisting such encroachments, and by our actual participation in these very indelicacies in conversation, that gradually pollute the mind, and sap the moral principles. Those of the world with whom we are associated, seeing that we not only fail to rebuke them, but actually take part with them, and sometimes run ahead, feel licensed to yield all respect for the sanctity of our religious profession, and to let their tongues run unbridled.

We are in much danger here, my friends—a danger all the greater because we are not always conscious of its nearness; and I would to God that I could send you young people away to-day solemnly impressed—profoundly convinced—of the peril which your social relations place you in, and the need there is for you, in all your intercourse with the world, to strive to make it the receiver of that good which your profession justifies them in expecting you to show forth.

In the natural world order is maintained by the reciprocal action of matter. In obedience to this law all the wonderful revolutions in nature take place: it is by reciprocal movement among the material particles, great and small, of which the universe is composed. Now it is equally true that the changes in the moral world are produced by a similar law in morals and mind. It is by the action of mind upon mind that revolutions in this department are wrought. The corporeal may give aid in all this, yet the main force engaged in effecting moral and intellectual changes is the reciprocal

action of mind. Whatever brings mind in contact with mind, constitutes a means, by and through which these changes take place, and must assume an importance, in the proportion of its influence, among the agents by which moral and intellectual order is maintained. Now the faculty of speech being one of the most common means of intercourse between moral and intellectual beings, may be regarded as a leading instrumentality, both in framing the order and moulding the character of the moral world. Through the habit of conversation there are ever going on influences and changes in the moral, just as there are, by means of a reciprocal physical action, going on influences and changes in the natural world.

There is not a day of our lives—there is not an hour of our being passed in the social circle, but adds to this work of assimilation. It makes others partakers of our thoughts and feelings, or makes us partakers of theirs, or is separating us the wider; and all this is being done according to a law of our nature. This law is as fixed and as infallible as are the laws that regulate the natural world, and should be profoundly pondered.

It makes it impossible, my young friends, for any one of you to expose yourself to the action of another mind without your giving or receiving an influence either for good or evil. Nay, we will go further, and, that you may be impressed with the importance of guarding your associations, say, that this influence is exercised in a great measure in

independence of the will. It operates by laws independent of yourselves, so that a voluntary exposure of one's self to such action, will, in despite of exertion, result in the reception of influences, saving or ruinous, according to the good or evil character of such influences.

This being admitted, you can but see how solemnly our argument warns you against evil communications, and how loudly you are called upon to avoid those intimacies with the wicked by which your religion would be endangered.

We have said that our profession does not call upon us to be hermits, nor to abandon the business nor yield the associations of the world. As the apostle tells us, to do this would be to go out of the world. What we are striving to do is to caution you against a needless intercourse with such as have no fear of God before their eyes; and to incite you to watchfulness when, in the providence of God, or because of your business or professional engagements, you are thrown with the multitude that do evil.

We would particularly counsel you as to the company you voluntarily call about you as a member of society, and the friendships which, in obedience to your social instincts, you may form. What we want is that when it becomes your duty to mingle in society, you enter with the whole gospel armor on. Without this you can have no security. The feeling with which most persons go into society, as it is called, is a desire to give plea-

sure by their presence, conversation, and general deportment. This is the usual and natural prompting of every kind and generous heart; and with it is the persuasion that to impart this pleasure it is necessary to assimilate one's self to the company into which we go. It is called adaptation; and in this day it is common to commend the men and women of society who can with grace and ease adapt themselves to the company around them, forgetting, alas, that whosoever does this is in danger of surrendering his individuality, and that for a Christian to do it is, in many instances, to yield much that should never be surrendered; much, too, which to yield, is to foreclose all hope of his exerting a conservative influence upon the men and women of the world who may be his companions and associates.

To go into society, then, under the direction of this compliant principle, is to go unarmed and prepared to receive rather than give impression. This class of persons go resolved on being pleased with their companions, and expecting to confer a like enjoyment by this disposition. It springs from an inclination to introduce the principle of commendation into their social connections, and opens the heart to the unrestrained action of the social instinct.

If, then, the society into which such persons go is of a worldly character, the fact that it has been entered upon voluntarily, and with a receptive state of mind and heart, will render it a wonder if they come forth unharmed by the contact. If it be ex-

empt from the grosser vices, and present nothing more objectionable than the fact that religion is banished from it; that those who compose it habitually neglect the duties of Christianity; that they discard holiness from their topics of conversation, and so demean themselves as to give no ground for persons to suppose that they believe in the truths of religion, such as the evil of sin, and its certain punishment in a future world: even society like this, moral though it may be in some respects, cannot be made the source of constant intercourse and intimate friendships for Christians, without a sad loss on their part of the true spirit of Christ.

Ah, my friends, if these things are true—and that they are, there are many here this day can testify—what abuses are being practiced by you on your souls, and on the verge of what frightful precipices are multitudes of the young in our communion walking, with as careless a step as though danger were afar off! We tell you in all godly concern for your souls, that it is impossible for you to frequent those places of assembled fashion so common among us, without spiritual loss. Who among you hears of God there? Whose lips are opened, amid the blaze of lights and the sparkle of jewels, or in the pauses of the loud laugh, or the gay dance, to speak of the soul and its culture? When have you heard, on those occasions of gathered folly, the subjects of death, judgment, and eternity, dwelt upon in other than a spirit of heartless levity? Ah,

we say to you, and we would that it might lead to serious examination, that in those hot-beds of extravagance, and vanity, and silly prattle, your religious life cannot do other than undergo a rapid decline.

We appeal to you who have tried it. Did you on the morning of that day whose evening was to be given to fashionable amusements, or to an assemblage such as we have spoken of, find enjoyment in prayer, peace in meditation, or blessedness in communion with God? Did not the excitement of expectation effectually banish religion from your mind, and lead you either to neglect or to give but formal attention to those duties on which your progress in holiness depends? When you fully entered upon the carnival of the evening, did you find, amid the splendor and gayety by which you were surrounded, amid the intoxication of your senses, as beautiful forms swept by in the dance, and strains of music floated out on the air of night, did you then find a moment for God, or give one thought to your soul? Did those revels, pushed often into the very dawn of morning, ever send you home better prepared for prayer, or more fitted for those tasks which always bring comfort to the obedient soul?

We know well how the conscience replies to these questions; that it tells you, even as it then did, that the place of song and dance, of irreligion and worldly pleasure, furnished no food for the hungering heart; and that, on the contrary, the soul came away with a languid feeling of disquiet—an infinite

unrest, prompting to fresh draughts from the same inadequate fountain, and growing feebler and feebler from every such effort for satisfaction.

Let me say to you who are this day to promise renunciation, go not in the way of such temptations; or if thrown there by circumstances beyond your control, escape as soon as possible. They are of the world, and unless resisted unto victory, will lead only to destroy. Such society is a part of the agency employed by your foes in that contest in which you are now engaged. If your confidants are selected from among those who compose it; if you take from among them the bosom friends with whom your hours of intimate companionship are to be passed, you thereby place yourselves in communication with an element of sinful contagion, which, before you are aware, will have corrupted the whole moral nature, and left you destitute, not only of the power of godliness, but of all desire to glorify the name of Him to whom you are soon to pledge eternal fealty.

Another form in which the world proves our enemy, is seen in the hold its wealth gets on our affections, and the absorbing zeal which it imparts to our attempted acquisition of that wealth.

We do not say that it is sinful to desire wealth, or that it is wrong to acquire it. It is no proof that a man is wanting in piety to see him exerting himself in the way of diligent toil and careful expenditure, in the work of accumulation. We do not believe that because a man has much worldly

wealth, he is necessarily poor in grace; yet we do contend that the love of money, merely as an end, has been the rock on which thousands of hopeful barks have been wrecked.

It is not the simple desire to grow rich, neither the exertion to become so, that makes a man guilty in the sight of God. These may have about them the zeal of Christian virtue, because of the benevolent motive prompting to each, and the end contemplated by the desire and the exertion. This motive, and this end, may be the honor of God and the good of mankind; and in such case, not to desire riches, and not to improve every proper opportunity to gather them, would indicate but little concern for that cause which all concede depends in no inconsiderable degree on money as an instrumentality for its furtherance. But when the affections reach out after wealth as a means of selfish gratification only, and when men seek it to the neglect of the duties of religion, and in ways not authorized by the gospel code of honesty, then it becomes our enemy, and in this character it is that we have to meet and overcome it in our journey to heaven. It is because money is a protection to a man in this world, forcing off almost every temporal want, and supplying almost every temporal good, and frequently giving those who have enough of it a position among men which the highest personal virtue, if in rags, would never be able to confer, that a man becomes inordinately wedded to it. When he sees gold attracting toward its pos-

essor every thing it touches, there arises the desire to realize the power of the fabled king—that whatever he touches may be transmuted into gold. Hence the first step in the road of avarice is undue thirst for riches, united with a selfish end. When this is nursed by a vain imagination of what may be accomplished through means of gold, the unfortunate victim around whom mammon has cast his chain, soon finds himself in bondage—a slave to the base lust of gold. He gives unblushing proof of this bondage, by withholding from the cause of charity that aid which it demands of every steward of the manifold gifts of God, and which he would joyfully render if he were not a miserable bondman.

A man wearing worldly fetters of this kind, has no scruples as to the means of accumulation. His one purpose is to get all he can, and to use all on self. The misfortunes of his neighbor are seized on as occasions for his own enrichment; while the ignorance of the widow, and the nonage of the orphan, whom the misplaced confidence of the departed husband and parent committed to his guardianship, form no barriers to the rapacious graspings of his miserly soul.

“Love not the world,” then, “neither the things of the world,” for “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” It is written, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have

erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." We pray you "flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness," . whereunto you are called, as you will this day make "profession before many witnesses."

Remember those words of Jesus, which so many seem to have forgotten: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Recall the case he has given of the young man in the Gospel, whom he loved and whom he instructed in the way of life, but who failed to walk therein because "he had great possessions," and learn "how hard it is" for those who have riches "to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Guard well your affections, that ye "be not entangled" in this common "yoke of bondage."

If you find your worldly engagements engrossing your thoughts and meditations, or restraining your feet from the house of God at the appointed seasons for prayer and Christian communion: if you find the disposition to send the messengers of charity away unsupplied growing in you: if you recognize the voice of the tempter urging you to employ means in gaining wealth which although not palpably dishonest, yet about which your conscience is not satisfied: if any of these or similar symptoms be about you now, or should you find them hereafter, we conjure you, by every hope of final victory, to free yourselves from them without a moment's delay! To hesitate, is to wear the chain and live a slave. "Use the world, as not abusing

it," should be your motto. As you have opportunity to increase your possessions, so increase them; but remember that you are God's steward, and that you have no right to use what is given only as he has authorized, or for any other purpose than will honor him and his cause.

Were the Christian world alive to their duty in this matter, the millennium time would not draw nigh with so tardy steps. There is so much living for ourselves, so little of that expanding benevolence which was illustrated in the life of Jesus, that the faith of good men languishes over the sad condition of the Church.

The most liberal do but little, compared with the abundance expended by the world, in the service of their souls. Contrast the outlay of the Church and the world, in their distinctive fields, in this city, [Mobile, Ala.,] for one year, and you can but blush at the amazing disproportion. What man of pleasure, or woman in fashionable society, that does not quadruple the outlay of the most benevolent among us in the amount expended on the person, and for amusements, luxuries, and sensual gratification! and then when we add to this the fearful fact that a majority of professing Christians are far more liberal in their fashionable follies and in their patronage of the emporiums of extravagance common to the times, the spectacle becomes not only discouraging but appalling.

Let these reflections enter your minds, whom we are this day solemnly counselling; and as you pon-

der the sad truth, resolve that, as “children of light,” you, at least, will not suffer the sons of darkness to outreach you in their zeal, but that all you have and are shall henceforth be laid on the altar of consecration, to be used in the way that God in his word or by his providence may indicate.

We have been compelled, thus far, in presenting you the danger arising from your worldly associations, to generalize more than we desired. If you have given attention, however, you will have perceived that our leading object has been to guard you against intimacies with the wicked; to warn you of the demoralizing influences of fashionable life, of the ruinous tendency of those amusements to which your position here will expose you; and to admonish you against that crying sin of the age and Church—*avarice*!

So numerous are the phases in which the world may be regarded as opposed to growth in piety, that we can only outline the subject in our discourse. With the word of God, however, to guide you, and in the exercise of frequent and earnest prayer to the Father for illumination, you will be able to define that narrow way in which you are to walk; and to these sources of instruction do we most devoutly commend you and the interests of your immortal souls!

In the outset of our remarks, we alluded to the fact of our being exposed to evils and afflictions in this life, and that, inasmuch as these often lead to some inward conflict, they are to be regarded

as having a place in that world which we are to overcome. On this thought we would dwell for a moment.

These afflictions are a part of our heritage, and even religion gives no exemption from them. They are the results of the first sin, and affect the entire posterity of the sinner; and while the religion of Jesus has no power to avert them, it arms us so as that they cannot overcome us. They enter into the warfare in which all good men and women are engaged, and there is but little hope that you will escape them. Some of you may share less than others; yet each hopeful heart now before me will at some stage of the journey of life beat wearily under the force of its heaving grief.

Ah! my friends, we would not cloud the beautiful sky that may now bend softly above you: we would not take away one tint from that radiant future which your warm imaginations and careless innocence of ill have made bright as the beams of rising day: we would not cast a shadow on your coming life, as you stand so full of hope amid its fragrant dawn, but for the desire that it may prepare you to make even the sufferings of the future the springs of greater and more enduring strength.

If on this occasion so deeply interesting to you we dwell on the shadows that may yet gather darkly around you, it is with the hope that what we say may stimulate you to be ready to meet it: that it may lead you, before you feel that

———“Chilling heaviness of heart
which attends
The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we doat on, when a part
Of us dies with them, and each fond hope ends,”

to hide yourself so completely in the Divine pavilion as that even in sorrow you may rejoice in God.

It has been the lot of the purest and holiest to suffer. Jesus, our great example, lived a life of sorrow, and died upon the hill of suffering; and so do many now whose salvation is through means of the refining fire of affliction. It is God's will often to dry up the fountains of earthly pleasure, that the toiling pilgrim may draw supplies from heaven: to blight hopes born beneath the skies, that the hope of immortality may seem fairer to our vision: to permit misfortune and disappointment to attend us, that we may see the vanity of all that is attractive here, and be led to seek the things that are above.

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown:
No traveller ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers on the road.”

It is all of Divine goodness, and will work for our good. There are witnesses now before me to this truth. Amid their homes of poverty, they, and others not here to-day, on their beds of sickness, and with the memory of riches and health

now gone for ever, have borne testimony to the value of suffering. Go to them in their squalid habitations, sit down by them in their sickness, and ask them of their past, their present, and their future. They will tell you of times gone by, when they had wealth, as you now have; when the world allured them, as it does you; and when friends that lived in the fleeting sunshine flattered, as many now flatter you. They will tell you how all these were keeping them away from God: that in mercy he removed them: that although they have suffered, have seen the sunshine steal away, have buried, one by one, the group that hallowed the old fireside; that although troubles have assailed, friends deserted, sickness wasted, until now death

“Sits cavered in the hollow eye,”

in all they recognize the hand of God, unloosing the earth-tendrils, and binding the soul in ineffable fellowship to him. O blessed lessons these, learned among God's poor and around the beds of his sick saints!

Learn, then, to look upon misfortune, as we call it, and trouble, as things not improbable in your coming history, and resolve that, should they come, you will receive them all as messengers of love. Destitute of this spirit, the afflictions and bereavements of life will only drive you further from your duty, and make less the chances of your salvation.

We deem it a great triumph of grace when it has so brought the soul into subjection to the will of

God as to enable a Christian to receive affliction, of whatsoever kind, and to whatever extent it may be permitted, in the spirit of thankfulness. When the heart has been thus subdued, no matter how severe the means, it becomes a purified fountain, sending forth springs of joy. From its depths is reflected every grace of religion. God and heaven are in, and around, and over it; and like a tranquil lake which in the glowing twilight mirrors on its bosom the shining stars, so such a heart mirrors in it God, and goodness, and heaven. It not only keeps a

——“Cherished point,

Of earlier, happier times, when life was fresh;”

but, bounding beyond intervening years of sorrow, it sends its yearnings onward, where clouds, and shadows, and darkness never come, and returns with food that angels banquet on.

A heart consecrated thus to God, becomes the abiding-place of glorious thoughts and blessed images. We verily believe, that to such as it, God sends his angels in daily ministrations, and that these visitants are permitted, in some mysterious way, to impart to it, while in this world, a measure of their adoring rapture. Like birds, which, passing over water, dip their wings in its beautiful stillness, and then soar upward, leaving the ruffled element to regain its wonted calmness, so ministering angels, descending into the consecrated soul, gently stir its submissive quiet with their heavenly influences, and then pass on to where immortal fountains roll.

Make up your mind, then, to receive affliction at all times as from the hand of God. When it comes, "rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." The prophets before you endured it, and a greater than they has left you a glorious example of resignation under the calamities of life. O remember, amid all of trial or loss that may come, and amid every blast of winter that may nip the buddings of your fond and hoping heart, causing them to wither and fall dead around you, that

"Heaven's immortal spring will yet arrive,
When withered plants shall bloom again,
Bright through the years of love's triumphant reign."

We have now given you, in outline at least, the contest in which you are to engage. Do you shudder as you glance at your foe? Do fears of overthrow and apprehensions of discomfiture dampen your ardor, or cause thoughts of surrender to come upon you? If so, give no heed to them. He who hath said, "Fight the good fight of faith," has given you the pledge of victory. He has provided good armor for your defence, and if you keep it on and employ it as the Captain of salvation has directed, "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," can prevail against you. It will make you invincible. Our text speaks only of a part of this armor, the shield of faith; "and this is the victory

that overcometh the world, even our faith." Only have faith, and you will have that which will "quench all the fiery darts" of your foes. With it you need not fear the hottest of the fight. The most fiery dart hurled by the hand of the enemy will be quenched by this, and fall harmless at your feet. Whether that dart be selected from the quiver of persecution, or temptation, or affliction—no matter from whence it comes, or with what hate it be sent, or with what speed it may wing its flight to the designated mark, if over that mark the shield of faith has been placed, the destroying dart will be arrested, and the soldiers against whom it was hurled will fight on unharmed.

Well might John say, as he contemplated the field of battle—the foes we have to contend against, and our weapons of might—"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." He had tried its power, and could recommend it—could speak exultingly of its strength, and of the triumphs to which it will lead.

The time will not permit us to dwell long on faith, as the means of victory. If it did, we would like to show you in detail that it, and it only, supplies whatever from weakness or from ignorance we may lack.

As used in the text, it must be taken in its broadest signification, meaning the assent of the mind to the truth of religion, the consent of the will to the salvation revealed in the gospel, the trust of the

soul in Jesus as Saviour, and an unfaltering confidence in His promises of support in this world, and of reward in the world to come.

This faith, and none other, will make us victorious. It is adapted to the needs of every soldier. Is he ignorant? It opens to him the source of all wisdom. Is he helpless? It unites him with omnipotence itself. Is he vile in his nature, and base in his affections? This faith brings the means for renovating that nature and purifying those affections. In a word, it conducts him through the work of regeneration into the beatitude of the Divine favor, and, by the infusion of a new life into his soul, makes his hopes, his pursuits, and the aims of his life all new. When faith brings him into possession of this life, his entire course is changed, and the service of God becomes his daily delight.

It is the absence of this transforming principle that causes the sinner to regard all that we have this day urged on you, as a rigid exaction, an imposition on his nature. He is bound; and so long has he hugged his chains, that he fancies music in their sound. Ah, let the heart but be changed by the Spirit, through faith in Jesus, and that sinner, shaking off the bonds of worldly pleasure, would find in the very self-denial of which he now complains, the happiness his hungering soul has been crying for through years of sensual indulgence.

In this way, when faith implants the Divine life in the soul, it is, that those godly duties, which the

worldly deem arbitrary impositions, become a pleasure. Self-denial, then, is esteemed a privilege. That inordinate love of the world, of which we have spoken, gives place to heavenly affections, and the soul, which before was crowded with the meagre projects of time, becomes smitten with the hopes of immortality. He whose god was pleasure, and whose altar was fashion, is found sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning lessons of wisdom from the Highest. He has renounced the world and its vain pomp and show; he has separated himself from it, not in the grim spirit of asceticism, but in obedience to the summons rising from his regenerated soul. He does not look upon the world with the scowling glance of a monastic, but with an eye that has caught glimpses of a brighter world and of a lovelier abode.

Faith has built for herself a habitation in his bosom, and her whisperings are of pleasures more endearing and companionships more congenial than can be found in this world; and hope, pointing to these, bids him pass on to their enjoyment. He fights the good fight of faith, and yearns to lay hold on eternal life.

O, he is a happy man! The atmosphere he breathes is heavenly, while the joys he shares are born in God. He lives in scorn of the golden toys of earth, and has fellowship continually with the Divine. Loftier far to him is the music of heaven's psalmody than the wildest flights of poetry, or the richest numbers of song. He has faith, all-con-

quering faith, and is a victor. It tells him of a blessed country, a land over which no passing shadow ever floats; of groves beyond the reach of storms; of fragrant flowers, on which blight will never come; of streams that are to flow perennially: it tells him that the departed, by whose burial-places he weeps, are not dead, but, like the stars by day, shine on amid the unwasting noon of heaven; that if faithful, he shall overtake them; that their dust and his shall come forth at the sound of the trumpet of doom, all resplendent and imperishable: O! it tells him of a home where the long-parted dead are to meet and dwell together in unbroken union and eternal blessedness.

These are some of the revelations of faith; and under influences such as they exert, no Christian task can be esteemed hard, no conflict severe. I turn to the worthies of past ages, and, through this mighty principle, I behold them victorious. Amid the strife of moral battle-grounds, where they fought, I hear those words of their Captain, "My grace is sufficient," and, "Lo, I am with you alway;" and as faith drinks in these declarations, I see them marching on in triumph, singing as they march, "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

I take up the record of Paul, and from it read of its trophies. I read that it has "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens!" that by it "women

received their dead raised to life again;" that "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection;" that "others still had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, and slain;" that "they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, and of whom the world was not worthy."

These all "obtained a good report," through faith, and are now rejoicing over their victory. And with this bright catalogue to encourage you, can you fear? No! no! Their voices float around us, saying, "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." From the far-away heavens we catch the words, and feel that we will conquer.

Animated by these assurances, then, go forth to battle. The great Captain summons you. His armies in heaven and on earth are in motion. Above them we behold the shield of faith, all radiant with glory. O, place your names on our Captain's roll; and when time shall have effaced the deeds of earthly heroes, and the solid brass or towering granite shall be dust, your names will remain imperishable among God's immortal throng, "of whom the world was not worthy," and whose triumphal song will be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

DISCOURSE X.

A Funeral Discourse:

PREACHED AT MOUNT ARARAT CAMP-GROUND, LAWRENCE COUNTY,
TENN., AUG. 15, 1847, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF
CAPTAIN WILLIAM B. ALLEN, WHO FELL AT THE
CHARGE OF MONTEREY, SEPT. 21, 1846.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

“He, being dead, yet speaketh.”—HEB. xi. 4.

WE are assembled, my countrymen, upon an occasion of mournful interest. We meet to-day to pay a tribute to the memory of the young and brave, who have fallen, like the beauty of Israel, in the high places of our country. I need not announce the names of those whose early immolation of themselves upon the altar of their country, has filled so many eyes with weeping, and bosoms with desolation. They are graven on the hearts that beat in this multitude with an indelibleness which the flight of years and the gathering of sorrows will never efface. I feel that I cannot do justice to my task. It is one from which I shrink and would have withdrawn myself, but for the earnest solicitation of one whose paternal heart bleeds as memory lingers amid the carnage and death of Monterey. Around me are congregated on this occasion the weeping constituency of our departed young friend: those who had invoked him from the retirement of

the paternal roof—whither he had gone to indulge the warm affections of his filial heart, so soon as he was released from his collegiate toil—and, tendering him their voluntary suffrage, bade him go forth and be their organ in the legislative councils of the State. These are here. I see before me many who were with him in his early boyhood; who were partners in his sports, companions in his rambles, and whose memories of him embrace a thousand tender associations of youth, which cannot enter the recollections of the more aged; you too are here, to weep, as we bid you gaze on the pale form of your early boy-associate—shrouded and dead.

Here, too, are those who realize a still deeper sympathy—a sadder grief—his soldier-boys. These went forth to do battle under his banner. They were his companions amid the fatiguing march; they slept by his side upon the cold earth, gazed with him upon the blue covering, and, like him, thought of loved and absent ones. *They* listened to his kind words around the distant camp-fire, and when sick, were tended by his hands, and fed from his own soldier's platter. They were with him, too, amid the din and peril of battle; heard his deep voice as it rose above the thunder of war, encouraging them on to valor and to victory. They saw him when, in the pride of youth, he fell, covered with glory, and, what is better, prepared to meet his God. *You* are here, and in your bosoms must exist emotions to which we are strangers.

And yet others are here, whose unuttered grief is too deep to be alleviated by earthly balm. We would willingly invade the sanctuary of your hearts, if we could hope by it to dispel the gloom, or cast one gleam of sunshine there. Your holiest consolation will be, that your country has received at your hands the richest offering you could bestow—the priceless jewels of your love—and heaven has had its songs augmented by tones that once tremblingly addressed you as *Father* and as *Mother*.

Surrounded thus, my countrymen, I cannot but realize the magnitude of the duty imposed upon me. I feel, too, that the occasion is one that must enter with peculiar strength and earnestness into the hearts of many that compose this mighty multitude. In meditating upon the character of those whose lives we are called upon to notice, you cannot fail to remember an analogous loss which you have sustained; memory will cause to pass before you the familiar form of some one dear to you, as the subjects of this day's assemblage were dear to their kindred; some one whose bones moulder in a distant soil, and whose lonely sepulchre is unvisited by friends, and unwatered by the tear of affection. Deem not yourselves excluded from what little consolation we may be able to offer. We come as a people, at the appointment of the friends of the deceased, to offer our condolence especially to them; yet they claim no monopoly. We have sympathy for all, and would tender it to all. Seeing, too, as we have good hope that it is so, that the spirits of

your sainted soldier-boys are rejoicing together, in the enjoyment of eternal peace on high, we, their friends, met to dwell upon the virtues of their brave leader, would extend to you our warmest sympathies in your bereavements, and our most sincere prayer for grace to sustain you in their endurance.

It were needless for me to say that I rank myself with pride among the warm friends of WILLIAM B. ALLEN! for who is there among this vast number, that were honored with his acquaintance, but can give truthful expression to the same sentiment? I must be indulged when I say to you that during the twelve-months' intimacy that I maintained with him in the metropolis of our State, I realized a friendship the growth of which has never been equalled toward any other in so short a time. I loved him, deeply loved him, and have met you, his old friends, his schoolmates, his soldiers and his kindred, to recall his virtues, to dwell upon his brief but glorious career, and to gather from it lessons of encouragement in performing the tasks we may have to meet in coming years.

We come with no pomp or pageant to-day; such would little become the occasion. The ground upon which we meet is too holy, and the purpose in view too high, to have its mournful solemnity and impressive awe disturbed by the roll of the drum or the thunder of cannon. We come, not so much to do honor to the soldier, who has ceased from his toils and entered upon his rest, as to seize upon the spotless name he has bequeathed us, and,

holding it up before our young countrymen, invoke them to emulate an example so adorned with integrity, so radiant with glory. It was right that the stars of his country's glory, and the stripes upon which he gazed amid the cloud of battle, should wave over his bier when they were about committing his returned dust to the soil of that country for whose rights his heart had been stilled. The muffled drum, the mournful music, the nodding plume, the soldier's tears, all comprised a pageant in keeping with the task to be performed—the placing in the bosom of our mother earth one of her bravest soldier-sons; but meeting now to commemorate those traits that beautified his life, and encircled him in his departing hours with a halo of imperishable glory, such pomp and circumstance may well be dismissed.

One of the early customs of the Romans was to fill their halls with the images of such of their families as had rendered themselves illustrious. These images consisted of masks representing the features of the dead, with the costume worn by them, their armor, and various insignia indicating their position among men, and the glory they had won. They were so placed around the ancestral hall as to convey the appearance of living men, so that the descendant had constantly before him the regular succession of his ancestry. Upon the death of any member of the family of distinction, a wild and fanciful procession took place. These ancestral masks, costumes, armor, etc., were placed upon the

servants of the household, who, arranged in the order of succession, followed the newly deceased to the market-place, where a eulogy was pronounced over him; and from thence they repaired to the tomb, to commit his body to the sepulchre of his fathers. The effect of this awful procession was overpowering. The young Roman, as he gazed upon the dark ancestral line, apparently animate and breathing, offered anew his vows of patriotism, and caught a fresh enkindlement of glory as it leaped from the passing throng.

We are assembled, not to gaze on such an array of departed ones, not to look upon a theatric representation like that, but to remember the patriotism of our brothers—to contemplate their services—to place in our hearts the beautiful memory of their goodness, and to realize the truth of our text, they, *“being dead, yet speak.”*

Our first object, to-day, will be to impress on your minds the solemn truth set forth in the text, which is, that the conduct of each actor on the stage of life is to exert an influence in the world after his dismissal from it by death; and then we shall dwell upon the lives of the deceased as an illustration of this truth.

It is appointed unto all men to die. Death, then, is inevitable. We speak now of the suspension of the animal functions, and the realization of that change which leaves the eye closed upon the most beautiful objects, and the ear deaf to the sweetest melodies, and the heart dead to the tenderest emo-

tions. We mean the period in the history of man when all that is visible of him to the natural eye, or tangible to the touch, is shut out from our view, and the grave opens her dark bosom and folds her arms over us in our forgetfulness and oblivion; when the pleasures that may have beclouded the soul, the schemes of ambition or of benevolence that may have engrossed the powers of the mind, the visions on whose beautiful forms we may have gazed as they careered by like gorgeous clouds moving in mid-heaven; we mean the period when these, and all else that stirs the multitude of mankind, shall have passed away from our contemplation, and we shall have entered upon another state, to be engrossed by the mighty scenes to which the present bids us look. In this sense *all must die*. The doom hangs on all, and has passed upon all, with a few exceptions, from the hour in which the knell of heaven proclaimed, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" and so will it continue, until that period shall have arrived, to the full display of which John was admitted, when he "heard a voice out of heaven, saying, There shall be no more death." This, however, is but his departure from earth—but the veiling of his face from the living, while his actions remain to bless with their good, or curse with their evil. God has so established it that the agitations we give birth to while voyaging the sea of life, are to roll on with a dominant and widening sweep, gathering strength in their ample circlings, until the dirge of

time's last wave, breaking upon the shore of eternity, shall be lost amid the voices that people the endless future.

It is a solemn and unalterable fact. It has upon it the fiat of Heaven, and no disaffection on our part can change it; no striving to hide ourselves in the shadow of obscurity will avail in excluding us from its awful application. We are here, in existence, composed, too, of indestructible elements; endowed with a being on which the seal of immortality has been set. No mortal power can break that seal. Obscurity of birth or of fortune cannot lift it from us, nor can the darkness of the sepulchre dim its lustre. God has placed it upon us, and there it must for ever remain. The law of our being—the law of society—the great law of influence is, that actions live after the actor dies. In this sense we are all architects, rearing piles on which coming generations will gaze, when the names of their builders shall have perished amid the unremembered past. We are casting for ourselves mementoes of glory or of shame. These may be different, as there may exist a disparity in our means of doing good, or of diffusing evil: one may be a massive base, surmounted by a towering shaft, on which the eyes of the multitude—of the world—may rest; while others may modestly lift themselves from the family altar, visible only to the throng of devout worshippers that kneel at its humble shrine; yet are we all—rich and poor; old and young—artificers in action, building for all

time—building for eternity. These mementoes of ourselves, so invisibly preparing, are to stand as our representatives—as instruments of blessing or of cursing to the world—when our names shall be effaced from the vast catalogue of the living. We will perish amid our labors: the clamor of the builders, the revel, the shout, may cease, all memorials of our individual names may be lost; still, our actions, our undying actions, will be seen, radiant with increasing glory, or shrouded in darkening shame.

O! think not that life is so bound up in isolated selfishness that we can enter upon it, and continue in it, without contributing our part—great or little, as we may have opportunity—to the rolling of the vast population of which we are part and parcel, toward that perfectibility sung of by the heralds of a golden age, and disclosed to us in the brighter revealments of prophecy, or of heaping upon its massive wheels leaden weights of obstruction.

We are here, and must act in some way; and every deed has inscribed upon it *eternity*. Life is but one great registry, where each dweller is entering his deeds. These are to be read by succeeding ones, and are to influence them; and ultimately this volume is to be inspected at the grand assize of heaven, and by its contents destinies are to be awarded.

The doctrine which we are striving to impress upon you on this solemn occasion, is forcibly illustrated by the entire history of mankind. We see

the seal of one age, with more or less of impression, resting upon the succeeding one. The events of a generation cast their outline upon that which follows. There may be, there always are, distinctions marking a difference in each, yet the shadows or the sunshine of the departing will rest with distinctness upon the dawning one. The mighty events that distinguish an age (and what are such events, but matured action?) often form the elements of a revolution in that which follows. To this doctrine of reproducing influence are we to attribute the success which crowned the struggles of our fathers in the cause of freedom, and the subsequent achievements of the American people, which have made them second to no nation in the world. The intolerance manifested toward the Puritans, prepared them for the course of stern resolve which resulted in the settlement of New England, and finally in the existence of this free nation. The incredible privations endured by them from an oppressive hierarchy, wrought in their souls a hatred for tyranny and a love of freedom. Upon this aliment they fed their sons and their daughters; and rearing these in the free, wild solitudes of America, where the green earth and the vaulted sky were crowded with symbols of freedom, no marvel that the altar of freedom was the great colonial heart, and that when she demanded it, each hardy descendant was willing to yield, as his offering, his own warm blood. Our free institutions, founded upon and supported by the princi-

ples of republicanism, bear upon their front the high seal of prosperity and of national glory; and, receiving the homage of the friends of liberty everywhere, proclaim the might of the influence of that generation; yea, further, the universal throbbing of the heart of freedom, beginning to be felt from the classic plains of Greece to the farthest range of the distant Cordilleras—even to the sun-visited plains of Yucatan—shouts in trumpet-tones the majesty of that influence.

Nor is it less true with regard to the revolutions by which ecclesiastical powers have been shaken. Seizing upon but one, for the sake of illustration—the Lutheran Reformation—behold what a moral change suddenly passed upon the world through the influence of one master-spirit, and the actions of one generation. A fearful darkness had settled upon the religious world, and extended its effects to the civil powers. Man was sunk in the scale of being; fear tyrannized over the passions, and reason was bound in the chains of passion. Brutal, lawless lust and greedy ambition trod the earth with a dominant step; science, honor, virtue, patriotism, and devotion were forgotten, and every right, human and Divine, disregarded. An awful night had cast its pall over the world, and darkness, unrelieved by the beam of a single star, seemed to hold the world spell-bound. “Science became empiricism, and the pure religion of the Prince of Peace itself, became the pander for the lust of power and wealth, and was made the instrument

of crushing to the earth the very beings it was designed to elevate."

Thus, draped in clouds, and impregnated with storms, the darkened firmament was made bright by a solitary star that was hung out in the middle of the fourteenth century. During the fifteenth, others were visible, and in the sixteenth, the German Reformer startled the world by the lustre which he shed around him. Since that period, light has been increasing. Luminary after luminary has appeared—sparkling groups have burst forth; and now, the retiring darkness, the beautiful light, not only visible upon the hill-tops, but coming down almost from mid-heaven itself, is a witness of the power and increase of its influence.

What has been affirmed with regard to generations, may with equal truth be applied to individuals. There is not one of the actors that throng the mighty stage of life who does not, when the drama closes, leave an impress on the vast platform. The memory of the head of the household throng lingers long with the sorrowing remnant; and often in distant years from the sad event that made the child an orphan, memory comes, with its sad, lute-like tones, from the wreck which profligacy may have heaped upon it, and whispers to him of the past. O! it is in that hour of bitter reminiscence that the ghosts of murdered blessings, of violated innocence, and of destroyed peace are invoked from the past, and the deep piety of that mother, the godly conversation of that father, whose

efforts to bring back the prodigal were unavailing in life; these, gathered as it were from the grave, snatched from the lives of those who once lived, tell with emphasis the influence exerted after death, and prove that the dead often speak with a voice that breaks not from the lips of the living. Who does not now, while we speak, bring from the cells of memory the form, the look, the words, the life, and even the death of some dear departed friend or relative?

The grave, it is true, holds their dust; but their lives are with you still. Their pious words, their fervent prayers, their devotional songs, their last sickness, with its suffering and patience, their closing hour, with contest, yet with triumph, all are yours to dwell upon, and from them to gather consolation to do and strength to endure whatever in the providence of God may be needful for you. Holy lights these are, that burn beautifully bright in the sepulchre of the past, pencilling with their beams the truth that the dead speak. Innumerable are the voices that steal up from the burial-grounds of earth. The dead, all the dead—the dead everywhere—pour forth the oratory of the charnel-house. The rude resting-place of the humble cottager, and the pompous mausoleum of the prince, are alike vocal. The gorgeous sarcophagus in which the scion of royalty sleeps, and the unsightly ditch where the poor beggar found a release from his sufferings, send up a kindred eloquence. The dead all speak. I would earnestly impress this upon the

living, that they may so live as that from their dust a voice may arise the tones of which will cheer some pilgrim on his way to heaven. We repeat it, then, the dead all speak. Not the solemn chime—the knell of their departure—can drown their tones; neither the cold clay, nor the green earth, in whose bosom they await the resurrection, can muffle them. Their voices come in the wild revel, in the giddy dance, the lonely hour, the Sabbath stillness, the twilight's hush, the midnight's awe. From earth, and from ocean, they send out their pealing tones, proclaiming that, though dead, they yet speak. We may dismiss them from our sight, yet we cannot consign their deeds to forgetfulness. If their lives were made up of actions worthy to be admired, their deeds “can never die, nor dying be forgotten.” Indeed, it would not be deemed enthusiasm to say, that at death they just begin to live; they just enter, then, upon that existence of mighty influence and unclouded fame here, and of uninterrupted bliss there, for which their devotion to their country, to humanity, and to their God, so preëminently fitted them. Those whose lives dwelt not so much in the physical as in the mental and moral world, whose steadfast hearts never slumbered, whose souls struggled up into a nobler being, the great end of whose efforts was to do good, whose riches consisted in a name without spot, whose intrepidity was displayed in daring to do right, whose spirits were interfused in the institutions of their country and of the Church, whose

names have been engraven upon her proud pillar, and the blood of whose brave hearts has been poured forth in her defence—such men were not born to die. No cloud of death can hide them from our vision; no veil of dark sepulture can shut them out.

Go tread the solemn heights of Bunker Hill. Gaze upon the marble shaft pointing to the high empyrean above, and tell me if the deeds of a Warren, who fell there in the infancy of our national existence, are forgotten. While that pillar braves its summit to the tempest, or receives the dew which heaven distils, will the actions of that brave officer and his martyr band be fresh in the hearts of his countrymen. Tell me, ye who visit the shades of Vernon, is Washington confined to the little vault in which his body was laid? Is nothing left of him but the indistinguishable ashes that people a narrow house of earth, guarded by a few bending willows, and dirged by the ceaseless roll of the Potomac? Has Monticello, which contains the hand that penned the charter of American Independence, monopolized all that is left of a Jefferson? And say, ye who knew him in the quietude of peace, and in the terror of battle too, has the lion heart of a Jackson no mightier boundary than the republican vault at the Hermitage? Have those impulses which stirred his soul—so patriotic in their intention, and so iron-like in their execution—gone down into eternal silence, with the noble dust they animated? No, no!

“These shall resist the empire of decay,
When time is o’er, and worlds have passed away:
Cold in the dust the perished heart may lie,
But that which warmed it once can never die.”

O, there are beauty and majesty in the thoughts connected with this theme! The framers of our Constitution! the achievers of our independence! the preservers of all we hold dear as freemen, these are gone, but they are still remembered. The lips that were eloquent in our defence, when the word liberty was treason, have become silent; the arms that did battle for us have become dust, and the hearts that offered their blood have perished; still their spirits are with us. Their actions, embodying all that was noble in patriotism and lovely in virtue, evincing an utter abandonment of all self, an absorption of all interests, and all purposes, in the holy one of their country, are our legacy. Blessed inheritance! To these our satchelled schoolboys turn for examples worthy of emulation. These are beacon-fires, lighting up the sea of state amid our heaviest calamities and darkest hours. These, rising upon the coast, become pledges of safety and harbingers of success.

We may rear the marble pile, and bring the undecaying brass, as memorials of them; but images more vivid and monuments more lasting than these, meet the gaze everywhere. Their country—their happy country—their whole happy country, is the eloquent attestor of their virtues. The humblest mound of earth rising over the brave dead in our

free land, arrayed in its robe of sunshine, and glittering in the dewdrops of the morning, is a prouder mausoleum than royal oppressors ever reared o'er their tyrannized herd. Our country, we repeat, is the monument of her deliverers. Their epitaph is her freedom. Glorious names! Not only have they broken the chain thrown upon their own nation, but the victims of old despotisms hear them, and give indications of life. And thus will it be until the wild pulsations of the world's heart be for liberty. Whenever an agonizing people shall perish in a generous convulsion for the want of a valiant arm and fearless heart, they will cry in the last accents of despair, O for a Washington, a Jefferson, a Jackson! "Whenever a regenerated nation, starting up in its might, shall burst the bonds of steel that enchain it, the praise of our venerated fathers shall be the prelude to their triumphal song." They, being dead, yet speak.

Seeing, then, that we are to leave an impress upon the sands of life, when we are called from its busy pursuits, how deeply should we be impressed with the solemn importance of passing upon our conduct a constant and rigid scrutiny! Of what immense moment is it to us, and to those who are to live after us, and who are to be moulded, to some extent, by the influences we are to leave behind us, that we study to make that influence profitable! When we die, we too shall speak from our tombs. The sound will rise either to gladden or sadden the then living. We will then have sent

upon society a breath that will either fan into life, or wither into death, the beautiful buddings of moral virtue. Which will you do? You cannot be neutral; there is no such ground for your occupancy. Your life will be vocal with lessons of good or evil, of virtue or of vice, long after the grave will have closed over your clay. We invoke a decision this day. That you may be stimulated to a wise choice, we proceed now to lay before you a brief synopsis of the lives of the brothers Allen, who, united in life, were scarce separated in death.

Having consumed much of the time allotted us already, we cannot enter into a particular detail in the performance of this mournful task. Passing rapidly over this part of our sad duty, we shall strive to present such traits as were most conspicuous and should most excite your emulation.

With SAMUEL HOUSTON ALLEN we had not the pleasure of an acquaintance, which must serve as an apology for not alluding more frequently and particularly to him. He was born October 9th, 1829, and was in his eighteenth year when he died. From a few documents which have been furnished us, we learn that all that was dutiful in a son, modest in a youth, generous and faithful in a friend, were impersonated in the life and conduct of this interesting young man. To these traits of character, many that hear me now can bear witness. You knew him in early boyhood, the period of life when the fountain of action is without the fetters which a better acquaintance with the world

throws upon it. You shared an intimacy with him at an age when the conduct is without a mask, and knew well the nobleness of his nature.

After reaching the seat of war, finding his health broken, so as utterly to unfit him for duty, and not wishing to burden the army without being effective, he consented to receive an honorable discharge from the service. He had proceeded as far as the city of New Orleans, on his return home, when disease invaded the citadel of life, and he who had gone forth full of hope, yielded his spirit to God who gave it.

Our sympathies are all drawn out as we contemplate the close of this young man's life. He was far from home, and surrounded by strange faces. Had he been called to meet death on the field of battle, it would have been far more enviable. There is something in such a death that renders the spirit heroic. The roar of artillery, the thunder of cannon, the clash of steel, the tramp of cavalry, the streaming of banners, like thunderclouds against the winds of heaven, the dauntless words of the dying, the vision of future glory to our country, breaking upon the failing eyes of the pale soldier, as, with gaze fixed upon the waving symbols of that country, he passes far beyond the milky baldric of the skies, to a dominion in which no voice of war is ever heard—all these contribute to throw around death a glorious enthusiasm that renders him a welcome messenger to the departing warrior.

He feels, as life gently drops its veil, and all things are shut out from him, that posterity will enroll his name among the bright catalogue of immortal martyrs; and thus cheered by the voice of fame, he dies, as brave soldiers ever die, mocking the power of the monster. O! there is about such a departure a wild enthusiasm, which, however impotent in preparing to endure throughout that awful eternity which is to follow, divests death of its terror and girds the dying with a rainbow of glory.

“Thus die the brave, who sink to rest
With all their country’s wishes blest.”

But to linger day by day, in an enfeebling contest with the destroyer; to look in vain for the familiar faces gazed on in childhood, or the yearning look of love that bent over our cradle in watchful solicitude amid the helplessness and innocence of infancy; to hear no brother’s voice or sister’s tones breaking with hope and encouragement on the leaden ear as death gradually seals it to all earthly sounds; to have nothing but visions of home and its dear ones, its remembered spots and unforgotten things, passing before us, and all without hope of ever again mingling with them around the board, or altar of prayer; to die alone, or with strangers, and to feel that we must sleep with strange companions—ah! this is to *me* a death full of melancholy; one, too, which can only be alleviated by the reflection that over it religion can shed her

brightest manifestations, and administer her holiest consolations, the sweeter, perhaps, because of the absence of all human comfort. Such was the death of Samuel Houston Allen, and such the consolations he received.

His death couch was not surrounded by a venerated father, or a beloved mother; yet the God and Father of all was there to give him strength. No faithful brother or loving sister hung over him to wipe from his brow the grave's clammy dew; yet, blessed be God, Jesus Christ, his elder brother, and ministering angels, soon to be his companions, among whom, perhaps, was his brother William, were near, and mysteriously strengthened him in that hour of awful struggle.

Thus died our young brother, a Christian by profession and by practice, a nobleman by nature, and a martyr to his country by providence. We mourn his departure in humble resignation to the will of Him who hath taken him. We "mourn not as those without hope;" for although the spot that contains his body is not known to *us*, still God marks it, and in His holy keeping it is safe. Yes,

"God, his Redeemer, lives,
And ever from the skies
Looks down and watches o'er his dust,
Till he shall bid it rise."

With WILLIAM BETHEL ALLEN our acquaintance was more extended. A necessarily brief biography will now claim your attention. He was born in Giles county, State of Tennessee, the 16th of Jan-

uary, 1824. His childhood was passed under the eyes of his parents; and if it be true that domestic education moulds the future man, his father and his mother deserve the highest praise for that course of early training pursued with their son. Rich indeed must be the reward they have already shared in the honorable race run by their son, and in its peaceful though early termination. May their example not be lost upon the guardians of the rising generation! At the age of sixteen, William entered Haliden Hill Academy, under the superintendence of Mr. W. W. Potter. The worthy Principal of that institution has awarded him the highest character as a diligent student, an obedient pupil, and an humble Christian. It was there that he laid the groundwork of that ripe scholarship that he ultimately attained, and of that warm eloquence of the soul that so frequently enchained listening multitudes, and which reflects praise alike upon his own untiring industry, and upon the qualifications of his preceptors.

Having completed the course of study preparatory to his matriculation at college, he entered the Nashville University, under the presidency of that accomplished scholar, the Rev. Dr. Lindsley.

During his connection with this institution, we made his acquaintance. We but speak what is personal knowledge, when we say that he had a devotion to books reaching almost to idolatry, and a zeal for knowledge the most burning; an ambition, which, while it aimed at the highest achievements,

had none of the meagre elements of envy or jealousy in it; an ambition that sought his own elevation, yet wishing the while to forward that of others also; a piety whose profoundly-cherished principles preserved him from the corruptions attendant upon our large cities, and made him a lovely example of religiously-fortified virtue, towering above vice, and gathering strength amid surrounding corruption, together with a friendship that was blind to all selfishness, and more than "argus-eyed" to the interest of those who shared it. These were the leading qualities that fired his mind and warmed his heart. What we have said is fully sustained by the following deserved compliment paid him by the learned President of the University, a man whose praise is never bestowed but when merited: "This excellent young man graduated in 1844, having been connected with the University three years, during which time he received the entire confidence and highest esteem of the faculty and the students. He was uniformly the example and advocate of every thing that was lovely and of good report."

Having passed the regular term, and completed the prescribed course of studies in that institution, he received from the proper authorities the honors he had won, and bade adieu to his beloved Alma Mater, his honored preceptors, and his cherished classmates, and sought the endearments of home and home friends.

You remember, my countrymen—for you were

his neighbors—the plain simplicity that marked his manners upon his return. In some instances, the tendency of University associations, city intercourse, fashionable mingling, etc., is to create in the mind of the young man whose college ambition is to enjoy these, rather than to enrich his mind with enduring wisdom, a false conviction of self-importance, an assumed superiority to which he can lay no just claim, and which converts him into a contemptible coxcomb, instead of one worthy to be an example.

Such, however, cannot be affirmed of young Allen. *He* met you as he had ever done. *He* affected no city exquisitism; but, with a friendly smile and a warm grasp, he showed that whatever of knowledge he had accumulated from books, it had not been gained at the sacrifice of that simplicity of manner which ought ever to characterize republicans.

His continuance at home was but short; for he had but just received the greetings of kindred and friends, before the partiality of the latter placed him before the people as a candidate for a seat in the State Legislature. The field was new to him, and doubtless but little congenial to his wishes; yet ever prompt to do service, when invoked to it, he yielded his consent, and entered upon the stormy sea of politics—that deceitful sea where so many gallant young men have been ruined for time and wrecked for eternity. The same integrity of character, conscientious adherence to truth, and respect

for those of diverse sentiments, which had distinguished him in youth and won many warm admirers, were still exhibited.

Fearless in his defence of the political tenets honestly entertained by him, prompt and bold in their vindication, he never lost sight of the fact that his opponents had equal claims to sincerity with himself, and should therefore be respected. As an evidence of the exalted esteem in which he was held by his fellow-citizens, he was chosen by them to represent their interests in the councils of the State, when he was barely eligible, and that, too, over a competitor of extensive popularity, and whose long service and faithful discharge of trust in the Legislature of his State had made him emphatically the man of the people.

As a legislator, his course was such as to meet the universal approval of his constituency upon his return to their society. His position in that body, for strength of intellect, valuable information, and clearness in debate, would have been an honor to a head silvered with age. His unbending probity secured for him the confidence of both parties, while his youthful appearance and commanding eloquence won for him the rapt attention of the waiting crowd.

Soon after his return from the session of the Legislature, another voice broke upon his ear. It was the voice of his outraged country, whose rights had long been disregarded by an ill-judging foe, and whose soil had been invaded by that foe. It

was the voice of his perilled countrymen, who were menaced by indiscriminate massacre from superior numbers. The cry which came upon the wind from our little band of regulars, stationed with their gallant old leader, General Taylor—the Jackson of the age—startled him from the quietude of home and the endearments of friends. It fanned into a conflagration the flame of patriotism that had long been gradually kindling upon his heart; and with many of his early associates, the brave sons of his old neighbors, he came forward as a private and added his name to the list of regular soldiers furnished by your chivalrous county. In companionship with these he left you. We will not dwell upon that farewell. Let memory turn from it, for it was sad; and to array before you that departing column, would be to lift from the past too many flowers that have perished since that hour.

Such was his popularity, that soon after he reached Mexico, he was chosen by the company with whose fortunes he had united his as a common soldier, to command them. In his conduct as commander of his company, we see exemplified the nobleness of his nature and the benevolence of his heart. He claimed no superior privileges, no exemptions not awarded the common soldier. What *he* had, belonged to all who labored and suffered with him. His devotion to them was superior to all selfishness. As an instance, we would refer to his declining of the office of Quartermaster, tendered him by President Polk. Writing to his

father, under date of September 14th, 1846, he says, "I have this day sent my resignation to the President, who appointed me Quartermaster. The boys are unwilling to be commanded by any one else. By the grace of God, I will try to lead them, without dishonor, to victory." What affection for his company! What dependence on his God! In another letter, written during the prevalence of much sickness among his troops, he says, "I have thirty-five or forty of my original company, who are still able to march with us. They feel like brothers. I regret to leave those behind who are on beds of affliction. I hope they will soon rejoin their friends. May the great God protect and support them in all their trials and afflictions."

These attachments were not the offering of the occasion so much as the natural yearnings of a soul great in its affections. Love of home and its kindred dwellers, and of friends, tried and true, was a part of the man. To give illustrations of this, we must be permitted to make another extract from his correspondence. Writing to his parents, he says, "I have been to Point Isabel twice, for the purpose of getting a letter or paper from home, without success. My anxiety to hear from you is as great as is the distance which separates us from each other. I would be willing to deprive myself of every other earthly possession for the sake of seeing my relatives and friends. Never before have I been capable of duly appreciating the pleasures of home. Here *we* are, upon an inhospitable and

desert island. For us no rainbow smiles are wreathed, no hallowed invocation offered. But for those who are *far* away, and who live and will ever live in our affections, for them we have forsaken the endearments of home; for them we are willing to fight, or for them we are willing to die. Whether we return home in time, or fall in the field of battle, I hope that a good report will animate us ever afterwards, or cheer our friends when we are no more."

These extracts show the patriotism by which he was incited, the filial affection he possessed, and the Christian confidence he maintained.

We approach now the last act in the eventful drama of his short life—the storming of Monterey, and his untimely death; and how can we dwell upon it? True, it is a part of his history, in which we behold a converging of the rays of glory which had been beaming from him, in increasing majesty, from his boyhood. Yet in the midst of it he fell, and no breaking light can make us insensible of the sad truth that it is but the gorgeous garniture of the mourned, the beloved dead. The attraction of that hour, great though it be, cannot divert us from a contemplation of our loss; and the achievements won in it can never warm into life the noble hearts that then became cold.

The day ultimately dawned; a day, the coming of which had been waited for with feverish impatience by the American forces; the day that was to try their swords, and afford opportunity for gather-

ing immortal laurels, and avenging the blood of their countrymen that cried unto them from Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. They had hoped for it long, and had kept vigil with the fleeting hours the night before, so eager were they for its arrival. It dawned at last. Glittering in the distance might be seen the spires of Monterey, calm in the beautiful sunlight that slept upon them, unconscious, too, of the awful carnage of which they were to be the silent witnesses before that sun should go down. Behind dark fortifications, that frowned as if the scowl of war was upon them, were placed those messengers of death, the deep-mouthed cannon, those murderous "dogs of war," waiting to be "let slip," that they might howl the requiem of the departing ghosts of the soldier multitude. There were the deep entrenchment below, and the walled heights above, from which protruded the dark implements of death.

The busy hum swelling from the warrior multitude, glittering bayonets, gleaming swords, waving plumes, columns of infantry, lines of cavalry, the pealing drum, the piercing fife, the voice of command, all tell of a mighty preparation for the work of death. At length they come. The flower of Tennessee are in the van. Lovely sons! would that the doom that hung over many of you in that hour of elation could have been averted! No! no! The altar is prepared, and ye were to be the offering! Ye were the precious jewels of more than Spartan mothers, and they sent ye forth, consenting

to the sacrifice! O, America! America! thou art ever glorious whilst thou canst boast such mothers as these! Silently, yet with determined step, that van-column marched on to certain death. Is there no quivering of muscle? Is there no paling of the cheek, nor convulsive trembling of lip? There may have been, when the tread of the moving host just starting was first heard; but now there is none. Sometimes, perhaps, as memory repaired to the circle of home, and returned with the tears of a mother or a sister, shed at their departure, and held them before the soldier-boy, his heart may have beat with wild emotions; yet one thought of his country could calm the tumult, and change him from the son into the soldier. At length the command to *charge* is pealed along the line. Amid the wild rush of armed men, the heaps of slain, and the falling wounded, that yielded before the raking fire of the enemy, behold your son! your former citizen! your brave leader! with lifted sword—the same whose steel, when received from the hands of his honored father, he had breathed a vow never to dishonor—behold him, we say, as with the voice of the roused and fearless lion, encouraging his followers on to the breach and to victory, until struck by a cannon-ball, he fell! Nor does the scene of his earthly glory close here; for, grasping his sword with the fervor of death, and looking for the last time upon his wasted column, he exclaims, “*Boys, I am dying, but charge the fort!*” thus mingling with the last gleam of

earthly light the noble principle that guided him through life, *patriotic even in death*—"I am dying, but charge the fort!"

"Life's parting beams were in his eye,
Life's closing accents on his tongue,
When round him, pealing to the sky,
The shout of victory rung.

When, ere his gallant spirit fled,
A smile so bright illumed his face—
O! never of the light it shed
Shall memory lose a trace.

His was a death whose rapture high
Transcended all that life could yield;
His warmest prayer was so to die,
On the red battle-field.

And may they feel, who loved him most,
A pride so holy and so pure—
Faith hath no power o'er those who boast
A treasure thus secure."

Such was the life and such the death of William B. Allen, a man than whom, if God ever made a nobler, *we* never knew him. His life was an exemplification of patriotism, his death the commanding seal affixed to it. And can ye dream that one so rarely gifted, so entirely his country's and his God's, and so early called from the service of one to a companionship with the other, can repose in the grave in forgotten oblivion? or that no voice will ascend from his dust, no mighty tones swell from his memory? No! Though dead, he speaks

to us to-day. Though corruption has claimed his mortal part, his immortal deeds are ours—ours to cherish, and ours to imitate. People of Lawrence! Freemen of his native State! he has bequeathed you a legacy richer than all your vast possessions—his own illustrious example. O, value your heritage! Impart it to your babes, as you gather them around the warm fire for winter evening communings. In coming years, as your sons visit the neighboring town, and see an unadorned column rising from the earth, tell them of the spotless life, tell them of the glorious death of him in commemoration of whom it will have been reared. Tell them of his affection for his parents, his love of knowledge, his regard for morals, his devotion to his country, his fidelity to his God; tell them *all*, and, as you send them forth, bid them mould themselves by what William B. Allen was.

Glad am I that his bones have been gathered from a foreign soil, and placed where the tread of a foe can never insult them. The heart of his own proud State is a sepulchre worthy of him. Upon her green turf he trod when a child, and it is right that that turf should cover his clay. Here the emotions of his heart were first quickened, and then matured; and it is well that that heart should repose here when it became still. He sleeps in your midst. The grove of his childhood has become his warrior couch, guarded by the affection of his father, and the love of his mother.

“Rest, warrior, rest! By the father’s hand
Thither shall the child of after years be led,
With his humble offering, silently to stand
In the hushed presence of the glorious dead;
So rest, warrior, rest! for thou thy path hast trod
With glory and with God.”

Young men of Tennessee! Soldiers whom he led to victory! to you he still speaks. He calls you by all that is lovely in virtue, by all that was of good report in his conduct, and that was glorious in his death, to be emulous of doing good to your God and to your country.

He is not with you now: he is gone. Strive in the great battle of life to keep his example before you, so that its close may be marked by equal triumph. Kindred of my dear young friends! father! mother! though gone, they speak to you. They address you from the past. Their warm affection, uniform obedience and kind words, speak consolation to you in your tears. They speak to you from their heavenly abode. Beautiful voices steal down out of heaven to cheer you now. They whisper of the departed. They tell you of the temple in which they dwell, and of which, in a little time, you are to become occupants; of the waving fruit, the glad river, the blessed songs, the waiting friends; they tell you of heaven, and bid you be ready to scale the far-off heights, and share those joys for evermore! Speak on, beloved ones! We hear your voices, and hope soon to see you as you are, and so be ever with the Lord!

